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# Broadway Translations

*“Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale  
Her infinite variety.”*



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Broadway Translations

MENANDER  
THREE PLAYS

*THE GIRL FROM SAMOS*  
*THE ARBITRATION*  
*THE SHEARING OF GLYCERA*

*Translated and Interpreted by*

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TO MY WIFE



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## PREFACE

My purpose in this book is to give English readers the opportunity to enjoy Menander and, further, to make apparent his very great excellence as a dramatic writer. The text which I have translated is not that of any one editor. For the most part I have followed one or other of the editions of Capps, Körte, Südhaus, Allinson, Van Leeuwen, and Wilamowitz, in addition to the published articles of Jensen. The very few interpretations that are not to be found in these editions are my own. I hope to publish notes on them before long. They will appear soon in the *Classical Quarterly*. Scholars will know, and the reader should be warned, that in many places we know only approximately what Menander wrote. It has seemed best in this book to make no unnecessary references to difficulties or uncertainties of text or plot. Professor Allinson's edition in the Loeb series is recommended for comparison to those who seek detailed information about the patchwork which is unavoidable if Menander is to be translated at all. In spite, however, of uncertainty in regard to many details, I venture to hope that the total impression of Menander that is conveyed by my version will be

found to be trustworthy. The introductory and the concluding chapter have already been published in large part in the *Quarterly Review* for April 1928. I have also discussed Menander's attitude towards women in an article entitled *Feminism in Greek Literature*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* for April 1927. I have not as yet had access to Professor Gilbert Murray's essay on Menander recently published in *New Chapters in Greek Literature, Second Series* (The Clarendon Press, Oxford). To judge by reviews, it supplies the lack I have noted of an authoritative English appreciation of Menander. I regret that it appeared too late for my book to profit by it.

L. A. POST.

HAVERFORD COLLEGE,  
June 24, 1929.



# MENANDER

## THREE PLAYS

### I. INTRODUCTION

OF the hundred and five plays of Menander which circulated in ancient times no copies survived in the libraries of the Middle Ages. For centuries Menander could not be judged by his own work. He naturally retained the high place in literature that had been assigned to him in ancient times, and students made the most of the numerous excerpts from his plays that were quoted in other writers, some eighteen hundred lines in all. Moreover, the adaptations of Plautus and Terence seemed to give the best clue to the dramatic quality of his work. Nevertheless it was clearly impossible to have any real acquaintance with Menander under those conditions. We have only to consider the plight of a later critic who might attempt to reconstruct the plays of Shakespeare from excerpts in dictionaries and in collections of familiar quotations, aided by such later adaptations as Dryden's *All for Love*.

Fortunately for us many recent finds have added to our knowledge of Menander. Most worthy of note is the discovery by Lefebvre in Egypt toward the

end of the year 1905 of the remains of a papyrus codex that had contained several plays of his. This book had evidently been torn up by some functionary of the Roman imperial administration, probably in the sixth century after Christ, and its leaves had been used to protect the contents of a huge jar filled with legal documents. As a result of this bit of good fortune we have sufficient fragments of three plays, amounting in all to about fifteen hundred lines, to enable us to reconstruct the plots with fair plausibility and to appreciate Menander's sympathetic delineation of character.

Though we have the material to enable us to appreciate Menander, it does not follow that Menander has always been appreciated by those who have studied that material. It should require no argument to prove that all scholars are not literary critics, that not all professors, any more than all parsons or all artists, can enjoy a lively picture on the stage of ordinary people caught in the web of circumstance and revealing their humanity in spite of themselves. Anyone, however, who does enjoy studying and interpreting human nature will find that there is much literary delight to be found in tracing the interplay of purposes and cross-purposes in a comedy of Menander. Each character with his or her distinct complex of motives—motives which fit always the individual and his environment—acts and reacts with perfect plausibility; and each separate act advances the general movement of the plot. There is nothing accidental. The humblest

slave has his own personality, and acts each time as he has to act in order to meet, with his particular endowment, the needs of his particular situation. Yet the play as a whole goes forward. The separate motives clash ; each act produces its widening circle of influence ; and in the end a result is reached to which every one in the action has contributed his share without any intention other than to further his own interest or to do his private duty. The ordinary play does not give the illusion of life, because it lacks overtones. The relation of the parts to the whole is too simple. The actors in the drama are abstracted from life, that is to say they do not retain in the play the little whimsicalities and irrational impulses that give people in life their individual flavour ; they retain, abstracted from the rest, merely those motives needed for the development of the play. It is the overtones in Menander that give him his variety and charm ; and they justify the exclamation of the ancient critic : " O Life, O Menander, which is the copy ? "

For the ancient critics had no doubt of Menander's superiority over all other writers of comedy, Greek and Latin alike. He is even recommended to the young for study along with Homer. Nor need we be surprised at this, for he does indeed have in great measure the liveliness, the variety and the universality of Homer. He has also Homer's gift of creating a world of his own and of peopling that world with charming characters. No matter how much we might disapprove of Homer's people or of

Menander's, if we were to meet them in our world, yet in their own world they are so illumined by a penetrating sympathy and by the poet's detachment and imagination, that we see in them something eternally beautiful. To be sure there are unedifying clowns in Menander, just as in Homer we have Thersites, but an apology for clowns is hardly needed among people who admire Shakespeare. The slave and the peasant are in general much more sympathetically treated in Menander than in Shakespeare.

Such are the qualities of Menander that the translator who is not to betray his original must bear in mind. Menander had other qualities. He had, for instance, at his command a style that was always easy and natural, and at the same time sufficiently varied to render vividly the characteristic utterance of young and old, slave and free, male and female—this while preserving the verse form proper to comedy. To attempt to reproduce the verse form in English would be a great mistake, for verse would sadly misinterpret the tone of the original. Everyday life cannot be represented on the English stage by the use of anything but prose. Style can only rarely and in part be translated at all, and in the case of Menander all else must yield in the attempt to reproduce the dramatic qualities of the original. Now anyone who has read or heard a translated drama knows how easy it is to spoil the effect by a literal version. When the lover says for instance : " Let me kiss your mouth," we know

that *Mund* should have been rendered *lips*, if the result is not to be ludicrous. In a recent translation from the French, "*je suis donc à Paris*" was correctly rendered "so this is Paris," when nothing else would have given the effect. The translator of drama must render the situation, not merely the words. He must discover exactly what implication in each speech gives it its point, and must see that the point is readily seizable in his version. In lively dialogue especially, the literal meaning counts for little, and the implications are everything. Now Menander's dialogue is extremely lively and one must be always alert to follow the thought. Even when the situation is seized, it is not always an easy matter to find just the words in English that will present it clearly and deftly.

In any case no version of Menander is complete without an interpretation. The fine shades of character must necessarily be much clearer in the original than they can possibly be in a translation, and on the shades of character must be based any understanding of the plot. Much then depends on the interpretation. The fragmentary character of the plays, moreover, has given scope for a great variety of interpretations. Hence where a number of interpretations are possible, since no one who has not the genius of Menander can hope to know with certainty how he filled out in detail the gaps that occur in the action of his plays as we have them, it rests with the translator to choose in each case that possible interpretation which seems to him to give

the existing text its greatest significance. He must also present that interpretation to his readers in such a way that they can with the least possible perplexity find in the text the dramatic qualities that we know existed in the original. The translation and interpretation of Menander contain therefore a notable element of individual appreciation. The reader can only see Menander through the translator's eyes, and the translator is in a way proclaiming his special gospel of Menander in the hope that those who read may share his enthusiasm. Such is the mission of the translator.

With regard to the life of Menander little is known. He was a citizen of Athens, was born in the year 343 or soon after, and died at the age of fifty-two, probably in the year 291. He was as far from the age of Pericles as we are from the period of Napoleon. Euripides was as remote as Wordsworth is to us. Demosthenes, Aristotle and Alexander the Great are the names that represent for us the world of his youth. None of them survived Menander's twenty-first year. He was himself a pupil of Aristotle's successor in philosophy, Theophrastus, author of the *Characters*. The philosopher Epicurus was his contemporary and fellow Athenian. Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, was in Athens for the last twenty years of Menander's life. His uncle, Alexis, had been writing for the comic theatre for a generation before Menander and was to continue for nearly a generation after his death. Philemon and Diphilus were contemporary rivals who long outlived him.



Probably Menander really met an accidental death by drowning, as one writer informs us, for his productive period was less than half as long as that of his rivals who died a natural death.

He came of good family and was the friend of Demetrius of Phalerum who ruled the city for ten years (317-307 B.C.) in the Macedonian interest. When Demetrius fell from power and the democrats established a government, Menander is said to have been temporarily in danger as a friend of the old régime. A little later one of his plays was refused a production, perhaps because of some unfavourable allusion to the new government. The kings of Egypt and of Macedonia sent ships and personal representatives to invite him to visit their courts, but he preferred to remain quietly in Athens.

We hear that he squinted and that in regard to women his enthusiasm passed all bounds. This may be an inference from his plays, but in any case the inference would be justified. Of his hundred and five (some say three or four more) plays there was none without its love story. In fact Plutarch speaks of love as the connecting theme that flows evenly through all the plays of Menander. Later ages coupled his name with that of Glycera, and in the *Letters* of Alciphron we have a charming, and perhaps not wholly fictitious, presentment of Glycera's anxious interest in the success of each new comedy of Menander. He was not so popular as his rival Philemon and won only eight victories in the Athenian dramatic contests. Such meagre tradition as we

have in regard to the dates of his dramas is uncertain in its interpretation. He probably wrote at least one play before he was twenty, and from that time his average production was more than three plays a year. There was a marked development in his work as he grew old. The farcical element that is prominent in his early plays gradually gave way to a type of comedy in which a keen and sympathetic appreciation of the vagaries of human nature predominates. Of the three plays which are translated in this volume, the *Girl from Samos* probably represents his early manner, while the other two belong to the period of his maturity. *The Arbitration* is very likely later than *The Shearing of Glycera*.

In the second century after Christ Menander's tomb was seen by the traveller Pausanias as he passed along the way from Piræus to Athens. The pedestal of a statue which was set up in his honour in the Athenian theatre may still be seen there with its inscription. The popularity of Menander in later times is amply attested. Teachers of oratory recommended him to their students above all other writers. His plays were read at banquets by way of entertainment. Educated men, if we may believe Plutarch,<sup>1</sup> crowded the comic theatre only when Menander was to be played. Menander is the morning star of Greek comedy ; he is superior to Aristophanes and comes next to Homer. If we ask why in view of such popularity Menander's works were lost in the Middle Ages, the answer is that to the austere

<sup>1</sup> Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander.

Christianity of those days his subject matter appeared frivolous or wicked. The love of woman was not a theme for the attention of serious readers, and other readers there were none. If in our day again the fragmentary plays have not been received with enthusiasm by all scholars, it is because Menander's merits are of the kind that are least easily discerned in fragments. If you remove at haphazard half of any play, the rest loses most of its meaning. Indeed, even if our three plays were complete, they would not be enough to exhibit to its full extent the fecundity and versatility of Menander's creative power. If we had only *Love's Labours Lost*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and the *Tempest*, we might not fully appreciate Shakespeare.

The chief obstacle for the modern reader who attempts to enjoy Menander is found in the conventional elements in his plots. There is apparently a wearisome repetition of foundling babes, of long-lost parents, of intriguing slaves and of young men in love. This obstacle cannot be entirely removed, for the scope of Greek comedy, broad as it seemed to ancient critics, is much less than that of the modern theatre. It must be remembered, however, that the Greeks were habitually conventional in art. Having evolved a type, they never wearied of refining on that same type. There was more repetition in their temples than in their comedies. Each comic plot is really quite distinct from the others. And even in our day a good many plays end with the happy couple falling into one another's arms.

It is also worth noting that the elements of the Greek plot which seem to us so trite, have become so partly through association with melodrama. Now melodrama is the legitimate descendant of classical drama, but it is a very degenerate descendant. The plot is not nearly so exclusively emphasized in classical drama as it is in melodrama. The plot was either known beforehand, as in tragedy, or explained in outline in a prologue, as in comedy. The chief interest lies not in what happens but in how it happens, and how it happens is determined by the action, which in turn is based on character. It may be objected that the characters again are only types, but this objection is simply not true. The characters in Menander are quite unforgettable because of their vivid individual traits. In a modern play we are pleased to meet even one new character. Many a dramatic performance owes its interest solely to one part. Galsworthy's *Old English* comes readily to mind. As for stock characters we all know the stage butler, the stage Irishman, and the stage parson or professor. Originality is possible only against a conventional background. The Greek background differed from ours, and we pay too much attention to it. Within the limitations of his background Menander was surprisingly original.

Menander was perhaps most original in his attitude toward women and love, for he is almost the only Greek writer we possess who treats sympathetically the theme of passionate love. He represents men as renewed and exalted, not degraded by love. His

young men are impetuous and inflict many wrongs in the excitement of passion, but they are never callous or merely lecherous. They are really in love; they repent of the harm they have done and the aberration of the moment leads to lasting affection. The loyal wife, who wins back her husband by her constancy and tenderness is a favourite theme in Menander. His female characters are, if anything, more lovingly sketched than his men. It will be seen that Menander's imitation of life is not altogether realistic, that human nature is idealized in his plays to such a point that even the misdeeds of his actors are understood and therefore pardoned. No one is merely base, or merely an object of satire. Yet Menander managed to avoid the other extreme of overdrawn sentiment. His people are virtuous within the possibilities of their environment. There are no gratuitous exhibitions of superhuman goodness on the part of the most unlikely characters. For that we must go to Apollodorus of Carystus. Menander is a man of feeling, but he keeps his eyes open and his head clear.

The plays were acted on the conventional comic stage. The scene is a street. In the background are two houses. Since in most plays there is a good deal of action indoors, various stock devices are required to acquaint the audience with what is going on. This is particularly so in Menander, since the sorrows of respectable women are important in his work, and to represent respectable women as conversing in the street to any great extent would

have been too great a violation of Greek custom. Many actions have accordingly to be narrated. The soliloquy is very common for this purpose. The soliloquy is also used to disclose what is going on in the mind of a character. There is no pretence about such soliloquies; the dramatist needs them and he uses them frankly. Instead of pretending to be acting naturally the speakers often address the audience directly. Such methods are a matter of convention. There must in any case be some stage conventions in order to make drama possible at all; and while Menander's conventions seem to us extremely artificial, yet we must learn to take them for granted, as his contemporaries did. There is always plenty of action in a play of Menander, and so long as that action is effectively brought to the attention of the spectator, the particular method is not essential. The Greek stage imposed severe limitations on the author, but great authors have a way of making themselves understood in spite of the limitations of their medium.

Menander's plays were divided into acts, probably the conventional five. There was no curtain, but at the end of each act the players retired and left the stage to a crowd of revellers who amused the audience with a comic interlude. Much the same sort of entertainment is provided between the acts in Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire*; the actors wore masks, which were often works of art, subtly interpreting nuances of character. The effect of the mask was very little different from that of modern



make-up ; it helped to make the type of character clear at first sight. To be sure it prevented any play of features or sudden change of expression, but so for that matter does make-up. There are not as a rule more than three speaking parts represented at once, so that the ordinary theatrical troupe consisted of three actors who divided the parts among themselves.

In my version of Menander I have included only the three plays of which, though mutilated, our fragments are sufficiently extensive to make apparent their dramatic significance. I have not included the disconnected fragments or the badly mutilated remains of plays, such as the *Farmer*, the *Flatterer* and others not always definitely identified, which are not sufficiently extensive to present clearly Menander's dramatic qualities. The *Samia*, or *Girl from Samos* is a specimen of Menander's earlier manner, in which farce predominates. The *Perikeiromene* or *Shearing of Glycera* has twenty years of development behind it. Unfortunately the comic element of the play is better represented in the remains than the serious treatment of the relations between the main characters. Still the serious treatment must have been there, and in the *Epitrepontes* or *Arbitration* we actually have what is almost a problem play. It is possible to find in it more than a hint of the mature powers of the most sympathetic and observant portrayer of character that antiquity produced.



## II. THE GIRL FROM SAMOS

THE *Samia* or *Girl from Samos* is Menander's Comedy of Errors. The chief interest lies in plot and situation. At the same time the characters are well defined and sufficiently individual for the purposes of the play. There are two middle-aged men whose features stand out in vivid contrast. DEMEAS is well-to-do, good-humoured and peaceable. He likes to be comfortable himself and to have every one about him comfortable. There is a certain timidity about him that makes him scrupulous in his dealings with others. He would be very uncomfortable if he had actually wronged anyone, or if he were accused of injustice, whether rightly or wrongly. There is a genuine humanity in his willingness to befriend the unfortunate, but his judgment is sound and he would not willingly suffer impositions beyond certain limits. His own good-will is such that he has a genuine horror of real meanness or ingratitude. In fact his very tenderness might turn to fury if his comfortable confidence in the reciprocal affection and honesty of those about him were actually invaded by a brutal affront.

His neighbour, NICERATUS, is on the other hand a very uncomfortable man. He is poor and honest, and his pride is inordinate. He is always on his

guard against slights and strikes out at the slightest suspicion, and, since he is a very suspicious man, he is always striking out at those around him. He flaunts his poverty and his honesty, and his manners are intolerable. There is nothing in his position to induce respect; he must therefore compel respect by his irascibility. He has a wife and a daughter, PLANGON. Naturally they are afraid of him. He has no dowry to give with his daughter, so that she can hardly hope to escape by marrying. It is not surprising that she should secretly have become attached to her wealthy neighbour's son, MOSCHION. This callow youth is in turn sincerely attached to her and shows the seriousness of his intentions by accepting all responsibility for the baby that is born to her. Like most young men in Greek comedy, however, he is rather a heedless fellow. He has a nice sense of his own importance and is the hero of numerous romances which have no existence beyond his own imagination. As a matter of fact he is not really Demeas' son, but an adopted foundling. Of this he has no suspicion.

The little romance of Moschion and Plangon had been able to flourish undetected, largely because both Demeas and Niceratus were absent from Athens. It is their return that provides the complications of the plot. Naturally the lovers could hope for no sympathy from the stern Niceratus. It was essential that he should know nothing of the existence of his grandson, whom Plangon had been nursing for some time with the connivance of her mother. From

Demeas on the other hand the young people had everything to hope. He was rich and generous, he might well be moved by entreaties to acquiesce in the marriage of the two lovers. The matter, however, required delicate handling. Above all it was necessary to gain time.

The other members of Demeas' household have not yet been mentioned. Demeas had no wife, but he had a mistress whose position in the household was practically that of a wife. She is *CHRYISIS*, the girl from Samos, whose fortunes provide the main interest of the play. She had been expelled from Samos, along with the other Athenian inhabitants, in the year 322, after the Macedonian victory over Athens. Arriving in Athens as a refugee, destitute even of the means of proving her identity, she had by her plight moved Demeas to compassion. He had taken her in and had made her his wife in all but name. Legally he could not marry her until she could prove her citizenship. Any children born of the union must be illegitimate. Under such circumstances it was the woman's duty to prevent the birth of children. Certainly it rested entirely with Demeas to decide whether children, if born, should be permitted to live. Now it so happened that *Chrysis* did bear a child in the absence of Demeas. Either she followed his orders and exposed it to die, or more probably (the plot is not certain) her baby died a natural death shortly before the father's return. There is no great improbability in the coincidence that both *Chrysis* and *Plangon* had

babies. They were not necessarily born on the same date. We must merely suppose that, when the imminent arrival of Demeas and Niceratus made it necessary to conceal Plangon's baby, Chrysis was able and willing to act as temporary mother. She knew better than anyone the good humour and generosity of Demeas' nature. She was sure of his yielding in the end to Moschion's entreaties. In the meantime she could protect the child and say nothing of Moschion's interest in it. The servants of course had to be admitted to the secret. It probably did not seem a very dangerous secret to Demeas' steward PARMENO, so that he let Moschion and Chrysis arrange matters in their own way without any misgivings. In any case he took no responsibility upon himself.

So Demeas and Niceratus came home. Niceratus did not find an unexpected infant, but Demeas did. What was Chrysis doing with a baby? It was certainly taking a liberty to bring up an infant without his permission, but after all he was fond of her. She would always have a home with him. It wasn't really the thing to do, but he hesitated, she entreated, and in the end he found her irresistible. Naturally it hadn't entered his head that he was not the child's father. In fact he was a little flattered that Chrysis should be so eager to make herself still further dependent on him. In the meantime he had news for Moschion. Moschion must marry Plangon. Demeas had incurred a great obligation to Niceratus (Niceratus may have saved his life at sea) and in



order to repay it Moschion should take his daughter without a dowry. Moschion consented with alacrity. There was no need to mention the baby until Plangon was safely in his possession, when there could not possibly be any difficulty. So all was bustle and confusion. Parmeno was sent to the market for a cook and provisions. Niceratus gave orders to his wife and daughter and then departed to do his own catering in person. This was the situation at the end of the first act of the play.

But of course there really couldn't be a wedding until the end of the fifth act. The lovers' luck was too good to last. Misunderstandings soon come thick and fast until it looks as if there would be no wedding at all; and it is hard to get the misunderstandings explained because the truth itself involves some difficulties and because the misunderstandings are so terrible that they quite deprive the victims of the ability to listen to reason. One character after another loses his balance and contributes to the confusion. The discovery that calms one sets another going until the dance is ended. Chrysis and the baby come flying first from one house, then from the other. Comic irony is everywhere. It is always just the attempt to clear things up, to make the best of them, that introduces new complications. The general result is a rollicking farce, full of verve and wit, but not without a generous measure of sympathetic character-study and fine feeling for the decencies of life. It was probably explained in the prologue that Chrysis and Moschion were brother

and sister, so that the spectators could look forward to seeing Chrysis in the end restored to citizenship and united in lawful marriage to Demeas.

At the beginning of the part that has come down to us Demeas appears on the stage and relates an incident that has aroused his suspicion, not of the truth, that Chrysis is passing off Plangon's baby as her own, but of a far worse crime, that she has so far forgotten what was due to him as to form a connexion with his son Moschion. If Moschion is the child's father and Chrysis its mother, her interest in the infant and her entreaties appear in a new and terrible light. This soliloquy does not interrupt the action of the play. It depicts with great skill the train of feeling that has been set going in the mind of Demeas and that turns him before our eyes from a genial, cautious, indulgent friend into a maniac, blind with jealousy and indignation.

DEMEAS (*he comes stealthily from his own house, evidently in great excitement about some problem that puzzles him. At last he communicates his situation to the spectators*): As soon as I was in the house, since I was all intent on getting ready for the wedding, I merely mentioned the situation to the household, and gave orders to get ready whatever would be needed, clean up, bake cakes, have the rites in order. It was all promptly under way, you may be sure, but the fact that they were hurrying operations produced some confusion, naturally. There was the baby screaming on a couch, where

they had tossed it out of the way, and at the same time they kept shouting: "Give me some flour, water, olive oil, charcoal." Now I was handing out one thing and another myself and lending a hand, so, as it happened, I had gone into the pantry and was sorting out a number of things and investigating, so that I didn't come straight out again at once.

In the meantime, however, down from the floor above comes a woman into the room in front of the pantry. For there happens to be a weaving-room, which you must pass through either to get upstairs or into the pantry. Moschion's nurse the woman was, she's an old woman, who has been a slave of mine, but has her freedom now. So when she saw the baby screaming unattended to, since she had no idea that I was in there, she thought it was quite safe to speak freely and went to it. Then after she had made the usual remarks: "Darling baby! Precious blessing! But where's its mamma," she kissed it and walked up and down with it until it stopped crying. Then she exclaimed: "Oh my goodness, only day before yesterday Moschion himself was like that and I used to nurse and fondle him; and now here's a babe of his for someone else to nurse [and see grow up to be a father. . . .]"<sup>1</sup> Just then a slave girl ran in from outside and the old woman said to her: "Give the baby his bath, for goodness' sake. What does it mean?"

<sup>1</sup> Here the text is faulty.

Don't you look after the baby when his father's getting married?" Then the girl says quickly: "Confound you, how loud you're talking! The master's in there." "Indeed he isn't? Where?" "In the pantry." Then raising her voice: "The mistress wants you, nurse. Move and be quick about it. He hasn't heard you. That's very lucky." And the old woman exclaiming: "Heaven help me, how I chatter!" took herself off somewhere or other.

I meanwhile sauntered out very quietly, just the way you saw me come from the house, as if I had heard nothing and hadn't noticed a thing. As I came along, however, I took note that it was the girl from Samos herself who had it and was suckling it, so one thing's certain, it's her baby, but who the father is, whether it's mine or—— But I refuse to pronounce the words to you, gentlemen, or to think them either. I simply state the case and report what I heard myself without upbraiding anyone for the present. I can bear witness, before God I can, that the boy has always behaved himself up to now, and has recognized his duty to me perfectly. On the other hand, though, when I realize that the words were spoken, in the first place, by his old nurse, and, in the second place, that she didn't mean me to hear; and then when I call to mind how the woman fondled it and insisted on keeping it in spite of me, I'm absolutely furious.

(As DEMEAS reaches the point where he can stand the strain no longer, the steward PARMENO arrives from the market accompanied by a cook and slaves with provisions for the wedding. At sight of PARMENO, DEMEAS resolves to extract the truth from him.)

But see, here's Parmeno back from the market just in the nick of time. I'd better let him and the men get by.

(He steps aside. Meanwhile PARMENO addresses the cook.)

PARMENO : Cook, I'm damned if I know why you carry knives with you. Your chatter would reduce anything to mincemeat.

COOK : Are you trying to be funny with me, you ignoramus ?

PARMENO : I ?

COOK : It looks so to me, by heaven. If I inquire how many tables you are going to set, how many women there are, what time you want dinner served, whether I need to engage a butler, whether you've enough crockery in the house, whether the bakehouse has a roof, whether everything else is available——

PARMENO : You are reducing me to mincemeat, my dear fellow, in case you didn't know it, and your technique is perfect.

COOK : Go to the devil.

PARMENO : The same to you by all means. Just get in with you.

*(As the cook and the servants disappear, DEMEAS steps out and calls.)*

DEMEAS : Parmeno !

PARMENO : Is someone calling *me* ?

DEMEAS : Yes indeed, *you*.

PARMENO : God save you, master.

DEMEAS : Put away your basket and come to me here.

PARMENO *(entering with the basket)* : No bad luck, I hope.

DEMEAS *(alone)* : I imagine that fellow doesn't miss anything that goes on among the servants. He's a Paul Pry if anyone ever was. But he's at the door.

PARMENO *(as he emerges, to someone inside)* : Give the cook anything he wants, Chrysis, and keep the old woman away from the wine jars.

DEMEAS *(impatient)* : By the gods, will you——

*(DEMEAS' demeanour so frightens PARMENO that he becomes incapable of telling a straight story and increases DEMEAS' suspicion by his attempts at evasion.)*

PARMENO : What's to be done, master ?

DEMEAS : What's to be done ? Just step over here away from the door. A little further.

PARMENO : There.

DEMEAS : Now just you listen, Parmeno. I don't want to flog you, by the twelve gods, for a good many reasons.

PARMENO : Flog me ? What have I done ?

DEMEAS : You are helping to keep something a secret from me ; so I have observed.

PARMENO : No, by Dionysus, no, by Apollo, not I !  
By Zeus Savior, by Asclepius !

DEMEAS : Stop ! No more oaths.

PARMENO : Well, you're wrong, or may I never——

DEMEAS : Here you, look here.

PARMENO : Well ?

DEMEAS : Speak. Whose baby is it ?

PARMENO : Uh ?

DEMEAS : I ask you whose baby it is.

PARMENO : Chrysis'.

DEMEAS : Who is the father ?

PARMENO : You, master.

DEMEAS : That finishes you. You are trying to fool me.

PARMENO : I ?

DEMEAS : Yes, I know all the details ; I've been told. Moschion's the father ; you're a party to it ; and she's the mother, as she says, and is nursing it now herself.

PARMENO : Who says so ?



DEMEAS : I saw her. Now just answer me this. Is this so ?

PARMENO : It is, master ; but the secret——

DEMEAS : What secret ? Hey, men, give me a whip for this miscreant.

PARMENO : Don't, in heaven's name.

DEMEAS : I'll brand you.

PARMENO : You'll brand me ?

DEMEAS : Yes, now.

PARMENO (*taking flight*) : I'm lost.

DEMEAS : Where are you off to, you carrion ? Catch him.

(*PARMENO escapes and DEMEAS' worst suspicions are confirmed.*)

DEMEAS : O citadel of Cecrops' land ! O far-flung sky ! O—— Why the outcry, Demeas ? Why the outcry, fool ? Restrain yourself. Endure. For Moschion is innocent of any fault. That's a strange thing to say perhaps, gentlemen, but it's the truth. For if he had done this thing wilfully, wrought upon by passion, or hating me, he would be guided by the same purpose now as then and would be up in arms against me. The truth is he has proved his innocence to me by his joyful reception of the proposed marriage. His eagerness wasn't due to love, as I guessed at the time, but to his desire to escape at last from my Helen there within. For she it is who is to blame for this. Evidently she caught him somewhere when



he was fired with wine, when he wasn't master of himself. Strong drink and youth often do such deeds, when they overcome a man—who may well have had no intention of injuring his neighbours. However I look at it, it's unreasonable that a boy who behaved with such propriety and restraint where others not connected with him were concerned, should have treated *me* like this, let him be adopted and not my son by birth ten times over. I'm not considering that, but his character.

But a vile, vile harlot, a consuming plague—— But what's the use? That won't do any good, Demeas, you've got to play the man now. Forget your fondness, cease to love, and conceal to the utmost the unfortunate facts for your son's sake; as for the base Samian, thrust her out of doors head first to perdition. You've a pretext—because she kept the baby. Give her no other explanation, but grit your teeth and be firm. Show your breeding and stick to it.

*(As DEMEAS makes this resolve, the door of his house opens and the COOK emerges to see what can be keeping PARMENO so long.)*

COOK: Well, then, is he out here in front? Boy! Parmeno! *(Disgusted.)* The fellow's given me the slip, why, before he'd lent a hand at all.

*(DEMEAS at once charges through the open door and proceeds to carry out his purpose. As he goes by he shouts at the COOK.)*

DEMEAS: Clear the way, you.

COOK (*peering breathlessly after him*): Heracles, what's up? Boy! Some old lunatic has just burst into the house, or whatever is the matter? What do I see? Boy! By Poseidon, the man's crazy, I believe; at any rate he's shrieking at the top of his voice. It would be very nice, wouldn't it, if my dishes lying right there in his way were to be smashed to flinders one and all. He's coming out. May you perish root and branch, Parmeno, for bringing me here! I'll step aside a bit.

*(At this minute the door opens and there come flying out CHRYSIS, nurse, and baby, pursued by the irate DEMEAS, who berates them.)*

DEMEAS: Don't you hear? Be off.

CHRYSIS (*bewildered*): Where on earth am I to go, for pity's sake?

DEMEAS: To the devil, off with you!

CHRYSIS: O unkind fate! (*She bursts into tears.*)

DEMEAS (*with bitter irony*): Oh, yes, unkind fate! Very moving, tears, to be sure. I'll put an end, I fancy, to your—— (*He suddenly checks himself.*)

CHRYSIS: To my doing what?

DEMEAS: Nothing. You've got the baby and the old woman. Clear out at once.

CHRYSIS: Because I kept the baby and because——?

DEMEAS: No "ands" at all. Because you kept the baby.

CHRYISIS : Is that all that's wrong ? I don't understand.

DEMEAS : You didn't know how to live in luxury.

CHRYISIS : I didn't know how ? What do you mean ?

DEMEAS : Yet you came to me with nothing but the dress you had on, mind you, Chrysis, and a very plain one too.

CHRYISIS : What of it ?

DEMEAS : It was I you thought the world of in those days, when you weren't doing so well.

CHRYISIS : And who is it now ?

DEMEAS : No more of this. You have everything of yours. I'm giving you servants besides, see ? Leave the house, Chrysis.

CHRYISIS : It's a fit of temper. I must go to him. Oh, sir, reflect.

DEMEAS : What have you to say ?

CHRYISIS : Don't be vexed.

DEMEAS : I shan't. Some other woman will put up with what I have to offer, Chrysis, from now on, and thank the gods too.

CHRYISIS : What's the matter ?

DEMEAS : Why, you've got a son, that's all.

CHRYISIS : That's not all. You're vexed. Still—

DEMEAS : I'll smash your head, you creature, if you talk any more.

CHRYISIS : I deserve it too, but look, I'm going in now.

DEMEAS (*resorting to sarcasm*) : The great lady ! Now you'll discover in the city just who you are. Lady-loves like you, Chrysis, make a bare ten shillings, running about to dinners and drinking strong drink until they die—or until they go hungry, if they don't die promptly and speedily. Nobody will know what it is like any better than you will, I fancy, and you'll find out just what you amounted to when you made your mistake. (CHRYISIS *approaches*.) Stay where you are. (*He slams the door in her face*.)

CHRYISIS : Oh, what an unlucky girl I am ! (*She weeps bitterly*.)

(*At this point NICERATUS appears on the scene escorting from the market a skinny old sheep as his contribution to his daughter's wedding*.)

NICERATUS : When this sheep is sacrificed, the gods and goddesses will get their due. It has blood, bile enough, fine bones, a big spleen, just what the Olympians require. And I'll make hash of the fleece and send it to my friends for a taste, since that's all that's left for me. (*The sheep is taken into NICERATUS' house and he spies CHRYISIS*.) But, Heracles, what's this ? Here's Chrysis standing in front of the house in tears. Verily it's no other. Whatever has happened ?

CHRYISIS : I've been shown the door by your good-natured friend. Just that.

NICERATUS : O Heracles ! Who ? Demeas ?

CHRYISIS : Yes.

NICERATUS : What for ?

CHRYISIS : On account of the baby.

NICERATUS : The women told me that you had gone crazy and were keeping a baby that you had let live. But he's mild as mild.

CHRYISIS : He wasn't angry at once, only afterward, just now. And he had told me to get everything in the house ready for the wedding, and then in the midst of it in he rushed from outside like a madman and now he's shut the door in my face.

NICERATUS : Demeas ? Is he mad ?

*At this point there is a considerable gap  
in our text.*

Niceratus evidently offers Chrysis a refuge in his house. His wife and daughter would be glad to welcome the baby, who, it will be remembered, was really Plangon's son by Moschion. We can only guess how Demeas learned that Plangon, not Chrysis, was the babe's mother. Probably he met Moschion, who, having heard of the expulsion of Chrysis, would betray anxiety for the infant's fate and by trying to calm his father would further provoke him. Demeas would at length, in spite of his resolutions, give vent to his indignation in such a storm of fury that Moschion, alarmed, would be glad to acquaint him with the true story and make his escape. Demeas, overcome with joy at finding his suspicions groundless, so that he may make friends once more with his mistress, is inclined to

take a cheerful view of life and plans to celebrate the wedding of Plangon and Moschion with more zest than ever. In this hilarious mood he accosts Niceratus and makes the mistake of appealing to that irascible man's non-existent sense of humour. Niceratus learns that Chrysis is forgiven because the baby she was cherishing was really Plangon's and that the joke is now on him, since it is his daughter who is responsible for the superfluous infant. Imagine the feelings of the proud and impecunious Niceratus at the prospect of having permanently on his hands not only an unwed daughter but a fatherless grandson to boot. Naturally violent as he is, his fury is on this occasion unrestrained. When Demeas proceeds to hint at Moschion's connexion with the affair, Niceratus misunderstands his embarrassment and assumes that he intends to break off the match. He rushes off.

DEMEAS : But come back and—— What shall I say ? Wait a bit, sir.

NICERATUS : I'm off. It's all over. All the arrangements are upset. (*He tears into his house in a rage.*)

DEMEAS : By Zeus, my friend here will be angry at what he has heard. He'll roar. The fellow's rough and brutal ; he doesn't care anything for anyone. But that I should suspect such things ! Beast that I am, I ought—— By Hephæstus, I don't deserve to live. (*Angry words are heard from within.*) Heracles, how loud he shouts ! That's it, he is calling for fire. He says he'll burn the baby. I shall see my grandson burnt alive before my

eyes ! There, he's coming out. He's a tornado or a thunderbolt, not a man.

NICERATUS (*rushing out*) : Demeas, Chrysis is taking sides against me and behaving most outrageously.

DEMEAS : How's that ?

NICERATUS : She's persuaded my wife to admit nothing at all, nor the girl either. She's keeping the baby in spite of me and refuses to give it up. So don't be surprised if I murder the woman herself.

DEMEAS : Murder ?

NICERATUS : Yes, since she's a party to it all.

DEMEAS : Oh, never do that, Niceratus.

NICERATUS : I wanted to warn you. (*He rushes in again.*)

DEMEAS (*left cowering*) : He's a raving maniac. There he goes flying in. How am I to deal with this terrible situation ? I know I never ran into such a row before. It's certainly much the best to make a plain statement of the facts. Why, heavens ! The door's banging again.

(*This time CHRYSIS comes flying out, still holding the infant, the murderous NICERATUS in hot pursuit with upraised stick.*)

CHRYSIS : Heaven help me ! What shall I do ? Where shall I go for refuge ? He'll get the baby from me.

DEMEAS (*at his own doorway*) : Chrysis, here !



CHRYISIS : Who's there ?

DEMEAS : Run inside. (*CHRYISIS gets behind him.*)

NICERATUS : Where are you going ? Where are you off to ?

DEMEAS : Jove, I've a prize-fight on my hands to-day, it seems. (*He intercepts NICERATUS.*) What do you want ? What person are you after ?

NICERATUS : Demeas, get out of my way. Let me get possession of the child and then hear what the women have to say about the matter.

DEMEAS : He's mad. What, are you going to strike me ?

NICERATUS : Indeed I am.

DEMEAS (*to CHRYISIS*) : Scoot in, you. (*To NICERATUS.*) But I swear I'll strike too. (*They struggle.*) Run, Chrysis, he's too much for me. (*CHRYISIS gets safely in with the child. As NICERATUS follows in hot pursuit, DEMEAS seizes him.*)

NICERATUS : You're the assailant now. I protest.

DEMEAS : But you have a stick to beat a free-woman and are in pursuit of her.

NICERATUS . That's a quibble.

DEMEAS : So was your protest too.

NICERATUS : Do you refuse to give up the child ?

DEMEAS (*incriminating himself to get an opening for explanations*) : What an idea, my own offspring !

NICERATUS (*incredulous and threatening*) : But it's not yours !

DEMEAS (*alarmed*) : Wait a bit. Help, help !

NICERATUS (*turning towards DEMEAS' house*) : Go on shouting. I'll go in and murder the woman.

DEMEAS : What's to be done ? Here's more trouble. I won't let him. (*Returns to the battle.*) Where are you going ? Do wait.

NICERATUS : Don't you lay a hand on me.

DEMEAS : Do control yourself.

NICERATUS : You've wronged me somehow, Demeas. You show it, and you know all about the affair.

DEMEAS : Then ask *me* about it and don't bother the women.

NICERATUS : Has your son made a fool of me ?

DEMEAS : Nonsense. He'll marry the girl. But that isn't it. Just take a stroll with me here—just for a little.

NICERATUS : Stroll ?

DEMEAS : And recover your self-possession. (*They stroll.*) Didn't you ever hear them tell at the play how Zeus turned to gold and leaked through a roof and seduced a girl imprisoned there in days gone by ?

NICERATUS : Pray tell me what has that to do with it ?

DEMEAS : Possibly one must be prepared for anything. Take a look and see whether your roof leaks anywhere.

NICERATUS : It's mostly leaks. But what has that got to do with it ?

DEMEAS : Sometimes Zeus turns to gold, sometimes to water. You see ? It's his doing. How quick we were to discover it !

NICERATUS : And you are taking me for a booby.

DEMEAS : By Apollo, no I'm not. Why, surely you're not a whit less noble than Acrisius. If Zeus condescended in his case, your daughter surely——

NICERATUS : Alas ! alas ! Moschion has played me this trick.

DEMEAS : He'll marry her, never fear. But this thing, I'm quite certain, is an act of God. I can name you thousands walking about in our midst who are of divine parentage, but you think something terrible has occurred. In the first place there's Chaerephon,<sup>1</sup> the fellow that gets his dinners gratis ; doesn't he look like a god to you ?

NICERATUS : He does look like one. What's the use ? I won't fight you when it can't do any good.

DEMEAS : That's a sensible man, Niceratus. Androcles<sup>1</sup> lives all these years, runs, jumps, makes a lot of money, walks about with a swarthy face.

<sup>1</sup> Chaerephon and Androcles were local Athenian celebrities, the former a professional diner-out, the latter apparently a professional athlete, who had discovered the secret of not growing old.

He couldn't die a paleface, even if you were to cut his throat. Isn't he a god? Just pray for a blessing on it. Burn some incense. My son will come for your daughter directly. Most things can't be helped. We must just be sensible. If he *was* a little wild that time, don't you cherish anger. Get things ready in the house.

NICERATUS : I will.

DEMEAS : The situation in my house needs catching up with.

NICERATUS : Very well put. (*He returns to his house to prepare for the wedding.*)

DEMEAS : I'm very grateful to all the gods to find that there is no truth in what I believed just now.

*(Here the act ends. Between the acts the spectators are entertained by the usual troupe of revellers. At the beginning of the next act MOSCHION comes on the scene. He has been brooding on the enormity of his father's suspicions and feels very ill-used.)*

MOSCHION : Just now when with great difficulty I got clear of the charge that was brought against me, I was content with that and asked for nothing better. As I get more self-possessed, however, and analyse the situation, I'm perfectly furious now. I'm exceedingly provoked to think what my father supposed me capable of doing. If it were all in order with the girl and there weren't so many obstacles—my oath, my fondness, the lapse

of time, our intimacy—enforcing me to servitude, I'd certainly not be here when next he brings any such charge against me. Instead I'd relieve the city of my presence and dash off for some place in Bactria or Caria to pass the time a-soldiering there. As a matter of fact, however, my beloved Plangon, I shall because of you do no deed of valour. 'Tis not permitted; love forbids, who rules just now as sovereign o'er my will. Still I mustn't let it pass altogether abjectly or mean-spiritedly. Rather I'll simply pretend, if nothing else, and frighten him by saying that I'm going to cut the cable. That will make him more careful hereafter not to be rude to me again, when he sees that I don't take it as a matter of course this time. (PARMENO *at this moment arrives on the scene, having gradually recovered his wits.*) But see, here's just the man I wanted most, turned up in the very nick of time.

PARMENO (*failing to notice MOSCHION*): By Zeus most high, a stupid, miserable piece of work I've done! When I was quite innocent of any fault, I took fright and ran away from my master. What had I done to deserve that? Let's examine the charges plainly one by one like this. The young master misdemeaned himself with a girl of free status. No fault of Parmeno's there surely. Pregnancy on her part. Parmeno not responsible. The baby came under our roof. He brought it, not I. Somebody in the house has admitted the

fact. What of it ? Where's any fault on Parmeno's part in that ? There isn't any. Why then did you take to your heels like that, you numskull, you chicken-heart ? Nonsense, a man threatens to brand me. He's mistaken to be sure, but it doesn't make a difference of one iota whether you are branded justly or unjustly ; any way it isn't nice.

MOSCHION (*accosting him*) : Here you.

PARMENO : Hello, sir.

MOSCHION : Leave that nonsense you're talking and go in at once.

PARMENO : What am I to do ?

MOSCHION : Bring me a cloak and a sword of some sort.

PARMENO : Bring you a sword ? (*He has visions of a gory corpse.*)

MOSCHION : Yes, and hurry.

PARMENO : What for ?

MOSCHION : Get a move on, stop talking, and do what I tell you.

PARMENO : But what's up ?

MOSCHION : If I take a strap——

PARMENO : No, no, no, I'm going all right.

MOSCHION : Why the delay then ? (*PARMENO goes.*)  
My father will come to me now. Of course he'll entreat me to stay at home. And he'll entreat in

vain for a while ; that's required. Then, when I think the time has come, I'll yield. Only I must be plausible and that, by Dionysus, is just what I can't achieve. He's at the door, coming out. (*It is, however, not DEMEAS, but PARMENO who appears.*)

PARMENO (*persuasively*) : You seem to be a long way behind the march of events here. What you know, what you've heard of the situation isn't at all exact, so you're all worked up about nothing. Give up your plans and come in now.

MOSCHION (*sternly*) : Haven't you got it ?

PARMENO : No, they're celebrating your wedding. They're mixing the wine, while incense rises, and burnt offering ascends upon Hephaestus' flame.

MOSCHION : Here you, haven't you got it ?

PARMENO : No ! I tell you they've been waiting for you ever so long. Aren't you in a hurry to fetch the bride ? Happiness is yours. You've no troubles. Cheer up. What do you want ?

MOSCHION (*with all the wounded dignity of adolescence*) : Will you give me advice, say, you polluted thief of a slave ? (*Beats him.*)

PARMENO : What are you doing, Moschion ?

MOSCHION : Will you run in at once and get what I tell you ?

PARMENO (*plaintively*) : My lip's split.

MOSCHION : Still chattering, you ?



PARMENO : I'm going. Zeus knows I am. But I've found the way to a heap of bad luck.

MOSCHION : Won't you hurry ?

PARMENO (*at the door*) : They're holding the wedding really.

MOSCHION : Go. Hurry. Bring me some news.  
(PARMENO goes in.) Now he'll come to me. However, gentlemen, if he doesn't beg me to stay at home, but loses his temper instead and lets me go—which didn't occur to me just now—what shall I do ? Probably he won't do that, but if ? For nothing is impossible. I *shall* look a fool, by Zeus, if I face about now.

*(Here the text ends. The stage seems to be set for NICERATUS and others to misunderstand MOSCHION'S delay in coming for the bride. How the final solution is brought about we can only guess. Very likely CHRYSIS is found to be MOSCHION'S sister and a citizen, so that she can be legally married to DEMEAS. MOSCHION must of course be united to PLANGON.)*



### III. THE ARBITRATION

THE *Epitrepontes* or *Arbitration* is more fully preserved than the other plays of Menander. We have more than half of it in good condition and can follow the plot almost throughout. Furthermore, the parts that are best preserved are of the greatest interest ; they are not the sort of clowning of which we have so much in the extant parts of the *Shearing of Glycera*. Menander's interest in the theme of love is well illustrated in the *Arbitration*. In fact it is almost a problem play ; and, though it begins and ends with a note of comedy, the crisis of the play is thoroughly tragic. Since we have the merest scraps of the first act, we do not know whether the situation was explained in a prologue or not. The probabilities are that it was.

The principals of the play are PAMPHILA and CHARISIUS. The latter is a young man who is devoted to philosophy and strict in his morals. In a modern drama he would be a rather priggish clergyman. In the play we see how love operates to broaden his sympathies, to teach him humility and to make a new man of him.

Charisius has a servant ONESIMUS, who is loyal but stupid. He has a great deal of curiosity and gets into trouble by his well-meant interference.

PAMPHILA was a young girl, brought up in seclusion, like all Athenian girls of means. About six months before our play opens she had been married to the man of her father's choice. She had come to love the upright Charisius and her patience wins for her in the end her husband's friendship and respect.

SMICRINES, the father of Pamphila, is a shrewd man of business. He is crude and excitable. He has the practical man's contempt for sentiment. He had married his daughter to Charisius because he approved of the frugal habits of the latter. His alarm when Charisius suddenly becomes a spend-thrift is excellent material for comedy.

SOPHRONA, Pamphila's old nurse, appears only in the final scene of the play. CHAERESTRATUS and SIMIAS are young men, friends of Charisius, who laugh at his serious ways and help him to drown his sorrows. CARION, the cook, is the usual comic figure. HABROTONON is the harp-girl, a slave, whom Charisius hires as a companion.

The event that produces the complications of the drama had happened ten months before. Pamphila had been assaulted by a drunken youth at the all-night festival of the Tauropolia, in which women took part. Five months after her marriage to Charisius, she bore in his absence a son. Her nurse, Sophrona, helped her to conceal the fact and saw to it that the baby was exposed in the fields, either to die or to be rescued by some chance passer. The discovery that Charisius is himself the baby's father

will of course provide a conventional solution of the problem of the play.

Charisius meanwhile would have known nothing of his wife's predicament except for the officious interference of Onesimus, who informed him of the fact. Charisius might have repudiated his wife, but chose instead to give her the opportunity to repudiate him. Her secret might thus be kept from her father and from the outside world. He embarked on a life of extravagant self-indulgence. He stayed away from home and spent money at a rate that was sure to lead Smicrines to take action. When the play opens, Charisius is staying at the house of Chaerestratus. The scene shows the two houses, that of Chaerestratus, where Charisius is entertaining his companions and the harp-girl, Habrotonon, and that of Charisius, where his wife, Pamphila, lives deserted.

## ACT I

Of the first act of the play we possess very little. We can, however, guess at the general course of the action. There was probably a prologue which explained the facts that have already been mentioned. There was a good deal of jesting on the part of the cook. He is a loud-mouthed drunken railer. He knows all the back-stairs gossip of Athens and retails it boisterously with the embroidery of a crude imagination. He insists on knowing why Charisius, who has recently married, is away from home with the harp-girl Habrotonon, and Onesimus finds his companion's free and easy ways rather trying. He is too discreet to tell all he knows. Finally Chaerestratus comes from his house and orders the cook to go inside and prepare lunch. Onesimus also departs, but Chaerestratus remains to observe a new arrival. This is Smicrines, the father of Pamphila. He is as unattractive as she is charming. He is the strict old man, who has no patience with weakness or extravagance, and insists always on the letter of the bond. On the present occasion he is in a state of great excitement, because he has heard in the city of Charisius' extravagant expenditures on cooks and harp-girls. "Twelve drachmas a day to a slave dealer for a girl! Why, a man could live on that for a month and six days besides!" "Yes," says Chaerestratus in a sarcastic aside, "it would keep him alive on poor-house soup." Smicrines finally goes into Charisius' house

to see what Pamphila has to say about her husband's conduct. Thereupon Chaerestratus retires into his own house to inform Charisius that his father-in-law has arrived and is likely to make trouble.

## ACT II

At the beginning of the second act Smicrines reappears. Knowing nothing of Pamphila's baby, he is indignant at Charisius' behaviour and sees no justification for it. He is not quite sure what to do, but is determined to do something. He is about to set out for the city to ask advice, when he is confronted with a strange situation. Two slaves, rudely clad in skins, are involved in a dispute. They come on the stage arguing. SYRISCUS, the charcoal-burner, is accompanied by his wife, who carries a baby. He is eloquently expostulating with the sullen DAVUS, a goat-herd, who maintains his case with equal heat.

SYRISCUS : You're afraid of a fair trial.

DAVUS : It's a put-up game of yours, curse you.

SYRISCUS : You've no right to keep what's not yours.  
We must get someone to arbitrate.

DAVUS : I'm willing ; let's argue it out.

SYRISCUS : Who's to decide it ?

DAVUS : Anyone will do for me. It serves me right though. Why did I give you anything ?

SYRISCUS (*indicating* SMICRINES) : How about that man ? Does he suit you as a judge ?

DAVUS : Yes, good luck to it.



SYRISCUS (*to SMICRINES*) : If you please, sir, could you spare us a minute ?

SMICRINES (*testily*) : You ? What for ?

SYRISCUS : We have a disagreement about something.

SMICRINES : Well, what's that to me ?

SYRISCUS : We are looking for someone to decide it impartially. So if nothing prevents, do settle our dispute.

SMICRINES : Confound the rascals. Do you mean to say that you go about arguing cases, you fellows in goatskins ?

SYRISCUS : Suppose we do. It won't take long and it's no trouble to understand the case. Grant the favour, sir. Don't be contemptuous, please. Justice should rule at every moment, everywhere. Whoever happens to come along should make this cause his own concern, for it's a common interest that touches all men's lives.

DAVUS (*alarmed at this burst of eloquence*) : I've got quite an orator on my hands. Why did I give him anything ?

SMICRINES : Well, tell me. Will you abide by my decision ?

SYRISCUS : Absolutely.

SMICRINES : I'll hear the case. Why shouldn't I ? (*Turning to the sullen DAVUS.*) You speak first, you that aren't saying anything.

DAVUS (*sure of his case but not very sure of his words, which come slowly enough to leave room for frequent pauses*): I'll go back a bit first—not just my dealings with this fellow—so you'll understand the transaction. In the scrubland not far from here I was watching my flocks, sir, perhaps a month ago to-day, all by myself, when I found a baby left deserted there with a necklace and some such trinkets as these. (*He shows some trinkets.*)

SYRISCUS: The dispute is about them.

DAVUS: He won't let me speak.

SMICRINES (*to SYRISCUS*): If you interrupt, I'll take my stick to you.

DAVUS: And serve him right too.

SMICRINES: Go on.

DAVUS: I will. I picked it up and went back home with it and was going to raise it. That's what I intended then. In the night, though, like every one else, I thought it over to myself and argued it out: 'Why should I bring up a baby and have all that trouble? Where am I to get all that money to spend? What do I want with all that worry?' That's the state I was in. Early next morning I was tending my flock again, when along came this fellow, he's a charcoal-burner, to this same spot to get out stumps there. He had made friends with me before that. So we got talking together and he saw that I was gloomy and said: 'Why so thoughtful, Davus?' 'Why

indeed,' said I, 'I meddle with what doesn't concern me.' So I tell him what had happened, how I found the baby and how I picked it up. And he broke in at once, before I had finished my story, and began entreating me: 'As you hope for luck, Davus,' he kept saying every other thing, 'do give me the baby, as you hope for fortune, as you hope for freedom. I've a wife, you see,' says he, 'and she had a baby, but it died.' Meaning this woman who is here now with the child. Did you entreat me, Syrus?

SYRISCUS: I admit it.

DAVUS: He spent the whole day at it. Finally I yielded to his coaxing and teasing and promised him the child and he went off wishing me a million blessings. When he took it too, he kissed my hands. Didn't you?

SYRISCUS: Yes, I did.

DAVUS: He took himself off. Just now he and his wife happened on me and all of a sudden he claims the objects that I found with the child—it was some small matters, tomfoolery, nothing really—and says he's cheated because I don't consent and lay claim to them myself. I say, though, that he ought to be thankful for the share he did get by his entreaties. Though I don't give him all of it, that's no reason why I should have to stand examination. Even if he had found it while we were going about together and it had been a case of share-your-luck, why he would have got part

and I the rest. But I was alone when I found it and you weren't even there and yet you think you ought to have all and I nothing.

To conclude, I have given you something of mine. If you are satisfied with it, you may still keep it; but if you aren't satisfied and have changed your mind, then give it back again to me and take neither more nor less than your due. But for you to have the whole business, part with my consent, the rest forced from me, is not fair. That's all I have to say.

SYRISCUS (*keeping a respectful eye on the stick*): Is that all?

SMICRINES: Didn't you hear what he said? He has finished.

SYRISCUS (*His words come fast enough but his flights of eloquence have a tendency to sink unexpectedly. However, his quick turns and lively gestures supply any deficiencies and DAVUS is left stranded just where he thought himself most secure*): Good. Then I'll take my turn. He was alone when he found the baby. He is right about everything that he has mentioned. The facts are as stated, sir. I dispute nothing. I got the child from him by entreating and imploring him. For his story is true.

Information came to me from a certain shepherd that he had been talking to, one of his fellow-workmen, to the effect that he had also found at the same time some trinkets. (*With a dramatic*

*gesture toward the infant.*) To claim these has come, sir, in person, my client here. Gave me the child, wife. *(Taking the baby from his wife's arms.)* This infant claims from you his necklace and his tokens, Davus. He says that they were placed with him for his adornment, not for your bread and butter. I too support his claim, since I have been made his guardian. You made me so yourself, when you gave him to me. *(Appealing to SMICRINES.)* It is now your part, sir, it seems to me, to decide whether the trinkets, gold or whatever they are, are to be kept for the child as his mother, whoever she was, intended them, until he grows up, or whether the very man who robbed him is to keep another's property, just because he found it first. But why then didn't I claim them when I got the baby? Because I wasn't entitled yet to speak for him. Nor have I come now to claim anything for myself. Share your luck indeed! Never call it finding where there's a party wronged. Here is no find appropriated, but a fund misappropriated.

Think of this too, sir. Perhaps this babe is better born than we. He may, though brought up among labourers, look down on our condition, seek his own native level, have pluck to ply some noble occupation, hunt lions, bear arms, take part in races at the games. You have seen actors, I am sure, and all these things are familiar to you. A certain Neleus and Pelias, the famous ones, were found by an aged goat-herd clad in a goat-

skin just like mine. When he saw that they were nobler born than he, he told them all, how he found and picked them up, and he gave them a wallet full of tokens and from that they found out everything about themselves for certain and, goat herds before, now became kings. Yes, but if some Davus had stolen and sold these tokens to get twelve shillings for himself, they would have passed their lives in ignorance of their great and noble birth. Surely, sir, it is not right for me to sustain his body, while Davus seizes and destroys his hope of preserving his identity. Men have been kept by means of tokens from marrying their sisters, have found and rescued a mother, have saved a brother's life. Life is full of pitfalls for us all, sir. We must use foresight to avoid them, must look a long way ahead to find the means.

But give him back, says he, if you're not satisfied. There he thinks he has something solid to fall back on. He's wrong. It's not right for you, when you are required to restore something that belongs to the child to claim him as well to boot—so that you can do your thieving more undisturbed another time, now that chance has preserved something that belongs to him. I have finished. Give your decision, whatever you believe to be right.

SMICRINES: Why, it's easily decided. Everything that was left with the child belongs to him. That's my verdict.

DAVUS (*expectantly*) : Good. But the child ?

SMICRINES : By Zeus, I'll not assign him to you, who have been trying to wrong him, but rather to the one who came to his aid and prosecuted you when you would have defrauded him.

SYRISCUS : Heaven bless you, sir.

DAVUS (*disappointed and furious*) : The verdict's scandalous, so help me Zeus. I alone found all of it and I've been stripped of all of it, and the man that didn't find anything has it. Am I to hand it over ?

SMICRINES : Yes.

DAVUS : The verdict's scandalous, curse me if it isn't !

SYRISCUS : Hurry up with it.

DAVUS : Heracles, what treatment !

SYRISCUS : Undo your wallet, and let me see. That's where you carry it. (*Appealing to SMICRINES who is leaving.*) Wait a minute, please, to see that he hands it over.

DAVUS : Why did I ever let him judge the case ?

SYRISCUS : Hand it over, you scum.

DAVUS : Disgraceful, the way I've been treated !

SMICRINES (*to SYRISCUS*) : Have you everything ?

SYRISCUS : I really think so. Unless he swallowed something while I was pleading, when it was going against him.



DAVUS : I wouldn't have believed it. (SMICRINES *departs.*)

SYRISCUS : Good-bye, sir. It's high time all judges were like that.

DAVUS : Heracles, what a skin game ! There never was a more scandalous verdict.

SYRISCUS : You were a thief.

DAVUS : Thief yourself, see to it now that you keep them for him safe and sound. Don't you fear, I'll have my eye on you the whole time.

SYRISCUS : Clear out and be hanged. (DAVUS *goes.*) Now wife, take these things and carry them inside to the master. We'll wait here for Chaerestratus just now and set off for our work to-morrow when we have paid the rent. But first we must check these things off one at a time. Have you a box ? Well, put them in your dress fold.

*(As SYRISCUS tells over the objects and tosses them to his wife, ONESIMUS comes from the house and vents his impatience. He is responsible for the entertainment provided by his master CHARISIUS in the house of CHAERESTRATUS.)*

ONESIMUS : A slower cook was never seen. By this time yesterday they had been at the wine for a long while.

SYRISCUS (*examining the trinkets*) : This looks like a fowl or something and a very plump one too.

Here is something set with stones. Here is a toy axe.

ONESIMUS (*true to his ruling passion*) : What's this ?

SYRISCUS : Here is a gold-plated ring ; iron underneath. The seal is a bull or a goat, I can't tell which, done by Cleostratus, it says.

ONESIMUS (*recognizing the ring*) : Here, let me see it.

SYRISCUS (*handing him the ring*) : There. But who are you ?

ONESIMUS : The very same.

SYRISCUS : Who's the same ?

ONESIMUS : The ring.

SYRISCUS : What ring ? I don't understand.

ONESIMUS : My master Charisius'.

SYRISCUS : You're crazy.

ONESIMUS : He lost it.

SYRISCUS : Put down the ring, plague take you.

ONESIMUS : Put down our ring for you ? How came it to be in your possession ?

SYRISCUS : O Apollo and the gods, what a frightful plague ! What a job it is to protect an orphan's property ! Every one who comes up is suddenly all agog for plunder. Put down the ring, I say.

ONESIMUS : Are you trying to be funny with me ? It belongs to the master, by Apollo and the gods.

SYRISCUS : Without a doubt I'd sooner have my throat cut than sacrifice anything to him. It's

settled. I'll go to law with them all one after another. They're the babe's, not mine. Here is a necklace or something. Take it, wife. And a bit of red cloth. Go on in. (*To ONESIMUS.*) Now what have you to say?

ONESIMUS: I? This belongs to Charisius. He lost it once when he had been drinking, so he said.

SYRISCUS: Well, Chaerestratus is my master. Either keep it safe or give it back to me, so that I may produce it intact for you.

ONESIMUS: I prefer to look after it myself.

SYRISCUS: It makes no difference to me either way, for I believe we both turn in here at the same house. (*Both turn to enter CHAERESTRATUS' house where CHARISIUS is temporarily established with his party.*)

ONESIMUS: Just now, though, the party is under way, and it isn't perhaps a good time to tell him about it. But to-morrow I will.

SYRISCUS: I'll wait for you and to-morrow I'll be ready to leave the decision to anyone you please. I've not come off badly this time either, but apparently I've got to neglect everything else and devote my time to lawsuits. That's the only way to keep things nowadays.

*(They go in and a chorus of revellers enter and entertain the audience.)*

### ACT III

(ONESIMUS comes from the house in great perplexity and soliloquizes.)

ONESIMUS : At least half a dozen times I've started to go to the master and show him the ring. I get up close to him, right by his side, and then duck. In fact I'm sorry for what I told him the last time. (*Thoughtfully.*) You see he keeps saying pretty frequently : 'Perdition take the rascal that told me of this.' Really I'm afraid he'll come to terms with his wife, then take me and put me out of the way, because I told him her secret and because I have knowledge of it. It's just as well that I refrained from adding another complication. Probably this means plenty of trouble too.

(*Here he is interrupted by sounds of a struggle. CHARISIUS' harp-girl, HABROTONON, is trying to escape from the importunities of his guests, who have noticed how little attention she gets from their host. She finally breaks away.*)

HABROTONON : Let me go, please, and don't bother me. Apparently I've been unintentionally making a fool of my unfortunate self. I thought I had a

lover, but the fellow's hatred for me is something diabolical. He has got so now that he won't even let me, mercy on us, have a place at the same table with him, but puts me at a distance.

ONESIMUS (*to himself*) : Then shall I give it back to the man I just had it of? Nonsense.

HABROTONON (*puzzled as she reflects on CHARISIUS' strange conduct*) : My goodness, what ails the man to throw away all that money? As far as he is concerned I'm qualified to carry the basket for the goddess, for pity's sake. Holy and pure from marriage rites, as they say, I've sat since day before yesterday.

ONESIMUS (*wondering what excuse he is to make to SYRISCUS*) : But then how, ye gods, how, I entreat you——

(*At this moment SYRISCUS enters in search of ONESIMUS, whom he suspects of appropriating the ring under false pretences.*)

SYRISCUS : Where can he be? I've looked for him everywhere inside. Here you. Give me back the ring, my friend, or show it to the man you're finally going to. Let's get the case settled. I've to go somewhere.

ONESIMUS (*embarrassed, but superior*) : This is the way it is, fellow. This ring really does belong to my master Charisius, I'm absolutely certain of that, but I'm afraid to bring it to his attention. It just about means making him father of the child it was found with, if I deliver it to him.

SYRISCUS : How's that, you simpleton ?

ONESIMUS : He lost it one time at the Tauropolia when there was a night celebration with women taking part. The natural inference is that he assaulted a girl ; she had a baby and of course abandoned it, the one in question. Now if the girl could be found first, then one might produce the ring and it would be definite evidence of something. Otherwise it means suspicion and disturbance.

SYRISCUS (*still suspicious*) : Just look to that yourself. But if you're trying to frighten me off, meaning me to take back the ring and give you a little present, you're out of your head. I'm not the man to compromise.

ONESIMUS : I don't ask you to either.

SYRISCUS : I'll be back when I have done an errand, for I'm going to town just now. I'll see then what's to be done about it.

(*As SYRISCUS leaves, HABROTONON approaches ONESIMUS. It has occurred to her that she may still win CHARISIUS' favour by a new method.*)

HABROTONON : Is it the baby that the woman is nursing now inside that this charcoal-burner found ?

ONESIMUS : So he says.

HABROTONON : Gracious, what a fine one !

ONESIMUS : And with it was this ring of my master's,

HABROTONON (*impressively indignant*): Oh! you wretch! If he really is your young master, and you look on and see him brought up as a slave, wouldn't you deserve to be put to death?

ONESIMUS (*surrounded by pitfalls*): But there's this to be said, no one knows who his mother is.

HABROTONON: But he lost it, you say, at the Tauropolia?

ONESIMUS: Yes, when he was carousing, so the boy that attended him said.

HABROTONON: Evidently he attacked the women who were celebrating the revels by themselves. In fact I was there when just such a thing occurred.

ONESIMUS: You were there?

HABROTONON: Yes, last year at the Tauropolia. I was playing the lute for some young ladies and was joining in the sport myself; at that time I hadn't—I mean I didn't yet know what a man is. (ONESIMUS *smiles knowingly*.) Indeed I didn't, by Aphrodite.

ONESIMUS: Yes, but do you know who the girl was?

HABROTONON: I could ask. She was a friend of the women that I was with.

ONESIMUS: Did you hear who her father was?

HABROTONON: I don't know anything about her except that I should recognize her if I saw her. A good-looking girl, goodness, yes, and rich too, they said.

ONESIMUS : Perhaps it's the same one.

HABROTONON : I don't know about that. Well, while she was with us there, she strayed off and then suddenly comes running up alone, crying and tearing her hair. She had utterly ruined a very fine Tarantine shawl, and delicate, my goodness. Why, it was all in tatters.

ONESIMUS : And she had this ring ?

HABROTONON : Perhaps she did, but she didn't show it to me. I'm going to stick to the truth, you see.

ONESIMUS : What am I to do now ?

HABROTONON : You look to that. But, if you're sensible and take my advice, you'll let your master know of this. If the child's mother is free born, why shouldn't he know of what's occurred ?

ONESIMUS : Let's find out first who she is, Habrotonon. Will you help me to do that now ?

HABROTONON : I really can't until I am sure who the man in question is. I'm afraid I might give information to the ladies I spoke of with no result. For all anyone knows someone else may have lost it after receiving the ring from him as a pledge. Perhaps he was dicing and gave it as security for an agreement, or he bound himself to something, found himself in a tight place and handed over the ring. Any number of other things of the sort regularly happen at drinking-bouts. Until I know the man responsible I'll neither look for her nor report anything of the sort.



ONESIMUS : Indeed you're quite right. What is to be done though ?

HABROTONON : See here, Onesimus. See if you approve of my idea. I'll pretend it all happened to me. I'll take this ring and go in to him.

ONESIMUS : Go on and explain, I see it at once.

HABROTONON : When he notices that I have the ring he'll ask me where I got it. I'll say : ' At the Tauropolia when I was still a maid,' taking on myself all that happened to her. Most of it I know.

ONESIMUS : No one better.

HABROTONON : If the escapade comes home to him, he'll immediately dash blindly at the evidence. He's been drinking and he'll tell everything first without stopping to think. Whatever he says I'll agree to, for safety's sake mentioning nothing before he does.

ONESIMUS : Superfine, by Helius !

HABROTONON : I'll be cunning and use general terms, like : " How reckless you were, what a savage ! "

ONESIMUS : Fine !

HABROTONON : ' How roughly you handled me and the clothes you ruined, alas ! ' I'll say. But first I want to go inside and get the baby, cry over and hug him and ask the woman where she got him.

ONESIMUS : Heracles !

HABROTONON : And to cap it all I'll say : ' So now here's a child born to you,' and I'll show him the one that was found.

ONESIMUS : A masterpiece of trickery and spitefulness, Habrotonon !

HABROTONON : And if this test works and he is plainly the child's father, we'll look for the girl at our leisure.

ONESIMUS : You don't mention the fact that you'll get your freedom. For as soon as he supposes you to be the child's mother, he'll obviously buy your liberty at once.

HABROTONON : I don't know. I hope so.

ONESIMUS : So you don't know ? But, Habrotonon, do I get any thanks for my part ?

HABROTONON : Goodness, yes ! I shall consider you responsible for everything I get.

ONESIMUS : But if after that you purposely forget to look for the mother and play me false, how about that ?

HABROTONON : For pity's sake, why do you think I want children ? Liberty is all I pray for. Ye gods, may that be my reward for what I'm doing.

ONESIMUS : I hope it will be.

HABROTONON : So you approve ?

ONESIMUS : I approve most heartily, for if you play any tricks, I'll attack you then. There'll be a way. For the present, though, let's see if it's so.

HABROTONON (*looking pointedly at the ring*) : So you agree ?

ONESIMUS (*loath to relinquish the ring*) : By all means.

HABROTONON : Hurry up and give me my ring.

ONESIMUS : Take it.

HABROTONON (*as she receives the ring*) : Dear Lady Persuasion, be with me to help and give the words I speak success.

(*She goes in to play her part while ONESIMUS soliloquizes.*)

ONESIMUS : It takes a woman to see how the land lies. When she sees that love won't lead her to liberty, and that she's not getting anywhere that way, she takes the other route. As for me, though, I shall be a slave all my days, moonstruck driveller that I am with no foresight at all about such things. But perhaps I shall get something from her if she has any luck. In fact I deserve to—How I waste my time counting on anything ! I think I'm possessed, expecting gratitude from a woman ! I only hope I shan't be worse off than I am. My mistress' case is pretty shaky now, for it only needs the discovery of a girl of free birth as mother of this baby to make him take her. As for this one in the house, I'll pray for her to separate from him—though in any case this time I think I've rather neatly avoided the charge that I have a finger in the pie. I've sworn off being too helpful. If anyone discovers that I haven't

minded my own business or haven't held my tongue about anything another time, he has my permission to pull out by the roots—my teeth. (*He sees SMICRINES approaching from the city.*) But who's this coming? Smicrines, coming back from town all excited again. Perhaps he has learned the truth from someone. I'll take myself off out of his way to avoid trouble.

Onesimus retires to the house as Smicrines appears and delivers a tirade of which we can guess the drift. Just enough of the manuscript is preserved to indicate the development of the plot. Here and there a brief phrase can be reconstructed. Smicrines has accumulated in town further evidence of his son-in-law's extravagance. As he puts it, "The whole city buzzes with the scandal." He knows for how many days Charisius has been living with the harp-girl, how much he spends on cooks, guesses that he gambles, and is so thoroughly alarmed for his ducats and his daughter that he is resolved to rescue them both from Charisius' hands without delay. He soon has new evidence of Charisius' misdeeds.

For Habrotonon has been playing her part within so successfully that Charisius has acknowledged as his the baby with which she confronted him. The resulting confusion completely breaks up the party. The cook emerges with his slaves and outfit, leaving the house in high dudgeon because of the interruption which has spoiled the feast that he was providing. He is violently berating the household

as he leaves. "A high time they're having with their lunch," comments Smicrines, and the cook continues: "Bad luck for me, bad luck and plenty of it. This time I've been caught somehow off my guard, but if ever again you happen to want a cook, you may go to the devil." Smicrines questions the cook and gets a good deal more than the truth. He hears not only that Charisius has a son by Habrotonon, but that he intends to dismiss his wife and make Habrotonon mistress of his household. The cook departs hastily, as Simias and other guests come from the house. They comment freely on Charisius' predicament. The comrade who had been so high and mighty about self-indulgence was now involved in a public scandal. Smicrines accosts them and gets confirmation of what the cook had told him. "But perhaps," he says, "I'm being indiscreet and meddling where I'm not concerned, since apparently I have grounds for taking my daughter and leaving. I'll do just that. I've practically made up my mind. I call you to witness that my daughter's rights have been infringed." Simias and Chaerestratus fail to mollify the old man. When someone asserts that Charisius hates the so-called life of pleasure, Smicrines retorts with a list of his recent outings, and expresses indignation at his treatment of his connections by marriage, to whom doubtless he had originally been recommended by his frugality. "This Sir Touch-me-not won't have everything his own way. He *will* waste his substance in a tavern, will he, live with the beauty that he's adopting into the household, while he completely cuts the acquaintance of his legal wife and her father?" No, no, Smicrines will see to that. Here the act ends.

## ACT IV

At the beginning of the fourth act Smicrines is talking to Pamphila, whom he has summoned from the house in order to take her away. He is astounded to find that she does not at once agree to leave her husband when she hears how he is behaving. We have two or three scraps of the long argument that ensued between them. Pamphila remonstrates: "Necessary for my own good perhaps, but that's what you must make me see. Otherwise you'd be, not a father dealing with his daughter, but a master with his slave." Smicrines retorts: "Is there room here for argument and demonstration? Isn't it as plain as day? The case cries to heaven, Pamphila. If, however, you insist on my explaining, I'm prepared. I will put before you three possibilities. He'd be ruined for evermore and so would you." He then points out how impossible she would find the situation, if she were to attempt to live in the house with Charisius, supposing him to bring home a mistress and her child. "It's hard," he said, "Pamphila, for a free woman to hold her own against a bought mistress, who schemes more, knows more, has no shame, humours the man better." Neither can Charisius afford to keep up two households. "Look at the expense. Double for Thesmophoria and Skirophoria.<sup>1</sup> Realize how ruinous it will be for his capital. Mustn't we agree that his case is desperate? Consider your position again. He says

<sup>1</sup> Religious festivals celebrated by women.

he has to go off to the Piræus. He'll go there and stay a while. You'll be miserable about it, I'm sure. You'll wait a long while without your dinner, while he of course is drinking with his mistress." The third possibility, that Charisius might spend all his time with the harp-girl and desert Pamphila altogether, must have been presented by Smicrines in even darker colours.

Pamphila, however, held her own against her father's eloquence and even against the despair in her own heart. When he pointed out her distress she agreed: "Indeed my eyes are all swollen with weeping." But marriage was for her a life-partnership. No matter how much she might suffer, no matter to what straits she might be brought, she would not of her own accord leave her husband. Charisius meanwhile was listening to this conversation. His feelings are described later. The effect on Smicrines of his daughter's determination to face ruin and misery rather than forsake her husband can be imagined. He goes off in a towering rage resolved to return with assistance and remove his daughter by force. Pamphila is left alone. She is desperately unhappy and sees no hope for herself, now that she has a rival, who has presented Charisius with a son. As she stands dejected by her door, the supposed rival, Habrotonon, comes out with the baby, still playing the part of anxious mother. Pamphila naturally desires at first to avoid the woman, not guessing with what dramatic suddenness her sorrow is to be turned to joy.

HABROTONON (*coming out*): I am going out with him. He's been wailing, my goodness, ever so long. There's something wrong with my baby.



PAMPHILA (*seeing her rival*) : Will no god take pity on me in my misery ?

HABROTONON : Darling baby, when will you see your mother ? (*Noticing PAMPHILA.*) But who is this next door ?

PAMPHILA : I will go.

HABROTONON (*recognizing her*) : Wait a minute, ma'am.

PAMPHILA : Are you speaking to me ?

HABROTONON : Yes. Look and see if you recognize me. (*As PAMPHILA turns, HABROTONON scans her face.*) She's the very one I saw. How do you do, my dear ?

PAMPHILA : But who are you ?

HABROTONON : Just give me your hand. Tell me, my dear, didn't you attend a celebration for girls at last year's Tauropolia ?

*(But PAMPHILA'S eye is caught by the trinkets that the babe is wearing. She exclaims at the sight.)*

PAMPHILA : Woman, where, tell me, did you get that child ?

HABROTONON : Do you see something you recognize that he's wearing ? Have no fear of me, ma'am.

PAMPHILA : Isn't he your own ?

HABROTONON : I pretended he was, not to wrong his real mother, but to find her when I had time. And now I have found her, for you are the one I saw that other time.



PAMPHILA : But who is his father ?

HABROTONON : Charisius.

PAMPHILA : Are you certain, my dear ?

HABROTONON : Indeed I am. But aren't you the young wife that lives here ?

PAMPHILA : Yes indeed.

HABROTONON : Happy woman, some god has taken pity on you. But someone is coming out next door. I heard a noise. Take me in with you, so that I can go on and tell you all the rest of the story just as it happened.

*(While HABROTONON is giving the overjoyed PAMPHILA a full account of the adventures of the baby that had brought sorrow but was now bringing greater joy, we learn of the crisis CHARISIUS has passed through. He had by chance overheard PAMPHILA'S conversation with her father. As she steadfastly refused to let anything induce her to desert her husband, not even his disloyalty to her, CHARISIUS, long torn between love and pride, had been completely humbled. ONESIMUS, eavesdropping as usual, grew more and more alarmed as he saw CHARISIUS become furious with rage, rage against himself and against anyone who might seem to have injured the gentle PAMPHILA. Not feeling safe in the same house with his master, ONESIMUS slips out and gives vent to his feelings.)*

ONESIMUS : He's not quite sane. By Apollo, he's mad. He's really gone mad. By the gods he is mad. My master I mean, Charisius. He's had an atrabilious stroke or some such thing. How else can you explain it ? He spent a long time by the door inside just now craning his neck and listening. His wife's father was having a talk with her about the business, I suppose. The way he kept changing colour, gentlemen, I don't care even to mention. Then he cried out : ' Oh darling ! what a wonderful thing to say ! ' and beat his head violently. Then again after a while : ' What a wife I had and now have lost, alas ! ' And to cap it all, when he had heard them to the end and had gone in at last, inside there was groaning, tearing of hair, continual frenzy. Over and over again he'd repeat : ' Criminal that I am, when I had myself done a thing like that, when I had myself got an illegitimate child, to be so unfeeling, so utterly unforgiving to her in the same unhappy situation. No humanity ; no mercy.' He calls himself names as hard as he can, his eyes are bloodshot with fury. I'm shaking in my shoes ; I'm all wilted with terror. If he catches sight of me, who told on her, anywhere, while he's in this state, he'll maybe kill me. That's why I've quietly slipped out here. Where am I to turn though ? What can I think of ? It's all over. I'm done for. He's at the door coming out. O Zeus Saviour, help me if you can.

(As ONESIMUS *hides*, CHARISIUS *comes out in*

*a state of complete abasement and soliloquizes.)*

CHARISIUS : Oh, wasn't I a paragon, thinking always of my reputation, trying to discover what honour and dishonour really are, without spot or flaw in my own life ! Heaven has used me well, just as I deserve. Precisely there I showed that I was only human. You poor, poor fool, swollen with conceit and loud in your preaching, intolerant of your wife's misfortune that she couldn't help, I will exhibit the same fault in you yourself, and then she will treat you gently, though you are bringing shame on her. You shall be revealed as at once a failure, a bungler, and a brute. How different from your intentions at that minute were her words to her father : ' She had come to her husband to share his life, she had no right to run away from the misfortune that had come.' But you with your mighty superiority are behaving like a savage. Where is your wisdom now ? What will happen to her if you go on ? Her father is going to show no consideration for her. What care I for her father ? I'll tell him plainly : ' You stop making trouble, Smicrines. My wife is not going to leave me. What do you mean by upsetting and brow-beating Pamphila ? '

*(No sooner has CHARISIUS made up his mind to make his wife's cause his own than he reaps his just reward, for HABROTONON comes to bring him the good news about*

*the baby. Naturally she is not a welcome sight to CHARISIUS, who almost at the same moment espies the unlucky ONESIMUS. In vain ONESIMUS affirms his innocence of eavesdropping. HABROTONON confesses that she is not after all the mother of CHARISIUS' child. Still more furious at the thought of the fraud that has been practised on him, CHARISIUS drives the abject ONESIMUS to throw all the blame on HABROTONON, who at last makes CHARISIUS listen.)*

HABROTONON : Stop attacking us, you foolish man.  
The child is your own lawful wife's, no other.

CHARISIUS : Would he were !

HABROTONON : By Demeter I swear it.

CHARISIUS : What sort of a story is that ?

HABROTONON : Absolutely true.

CHARISIUS : Is the child really Pamphila's ? It was mine before.

HABROTONON : And yours as well, to be sure.

CHARISIUS : Pamphila's ! Habrotonon, I beg you, don't raise false hopes.

*(The fourth act ends when CHARISIUS is finally convinced and goes to PAMPHILA. Husband and wife are reunited.)*

## ACT V

The fifth act rounds out the story. Unfortunately we cannot be certain what happened to Habrotonon. It is safe to guess that she gets her freedom. So in all probability does Onesimus. Simias and Chaerestratus are involved in the explanations, but we do not know just how their relations with Charisius and Habrotonon had been complicated by her temporary appearance in the rôle of mother of his son. At any rate all is set right. Habrotonon is complimented on her wit and courage and is perhaps placed in charge of Simias, who remarks, as the stage is cleared : " A girl like this couldn't have escaped his attentions (*i.e.* Chaerestratus'), but I will treat her with respect."

Smicrines remains to be dealt with. At this moment he reappears, equipped to abduct Pamphila and dragging Sophrona with him. She had been sent to meet him and to mollify him, but he is too headstrong to listen. The only result is to provoke him further. Since his excitement has been rendered meaningless by the course of events, he is an excellent subject for ridicule.

SMICRINES (*berating* SOPHRONA) : If I don't smash your head, Sophrona, I hope to be hanged. You'll admonish me too, will you ? I'm too hasty about carrying off my daughter, you cursed hag ? Am I to wait for her good husband to consume my

dowry ; and then make speeches about my own property ? You too urge that, do you ? Isn't it better to take the bull by the horns ? You'll be good and sorry if you say another word. My dispute is with Pamphila. Just you urge her to change her mind when you see her. For, Sophrona, as I hope for salvation, when I'm on the way home—did you see the pond as you passed ? That's where I'm going to spend the night ducking the life out of you and I'll force you to agree with me instead of taking sides against me. (*He approaches CHARISIUS' house where he expects to find PAMPHILA alone and unprotected.*) The door is shut, so I must knock. Boys ! Boy ! Open the door, someone. Boys ! Don't you hear me ?

ONESIMUS (*opening the door but not admitting SMICRINES, for his newly-gained freedom has made him suddenly bold*) : Who's that knocking ? Ha, Smicrines, that strict accountant, come for his dowry and his daughter.

SMICRINES (*surprised*) : Himself, curse you.

ONESIMUS : And sure, he's right. His haste befits a man of calculation and great wisdom. (*He notices SOPHRONA, helpless in the grip of SMICRINES and is struck by her humorous resemblance to Persephone or to any other beauty in the hands of a ravisher.*) And his prize, Lord save us, what a stunner !

SMICRINES : By all the gods and spirits——

ONESIMUS : Do you believe, Smicrines, that the gods

can spare the time to mete out daily to every individual his share of good or evil ?

SMICRINES : What's that ?

ONESIMUS : I'll make it quite plain. The total number of cities in the world is approximately a thousand. Each has thirty thousand inhabitants. Are the gods busy damning or saving each of them one by one ? Surely not, for so you make them lead a life of toil. Then are they not at all concerned for us, you'll say. In each man they have placed his character as commander. This ever present guardian it is that ruins one man, if he fails to use it aright, and saves another. This is our god, this the cause of each man's good or evil fortune. Propitiate this by doing nothing absurd or foolish, that good fortune may attend you.

SMICRINES : So my character, you scurvy knave, is doing something foolish now, is it ?

ONESIMUS : It's wrecking you.

SMICRINES : What impudence !

ONESIMUS : But do you really think it right, Smicrines, to separate a daughter from her husband ?

SMICRINES : Who says it is right ? In this case though it's necessary.

ONESIMUS : You see ? Wrong is necessary by his reasoning. It's not his character but something else that is ruining him. Now this once, when



you were bent on evil action, pure luck has delivered you. You arrive to find what was amiss all settled and atonement made. But another time, Smicrines, I warn you, don't let me catch you getting headstrong. But now I release you from these charges. Go find inside your grandson and salute him.

SMICRINES : My grandson, you carrion !

ONESIMUS : So you too were a blockhead for all you thought you were so wise. Is this the way you kept your eye on a young girl ripe for marriage? That's the reason we have these miraculous five-month infants to bring up.

SMICRINES : I don't know what you mean.

ONESIMUS : Yes, but the old woman knows, I fancy. That time at the Tauropolia it was my master, Sophrona, who found her separated from the dancers. Do you see ?

SOPHRONA : Yes.

ONESIMUS : And now they've recognized each other and all's well.

SMICRINES (*to SOPHRONA*) : What's this he's saying, you cursed hag ?

SOPHRONA (*quoting Euripides*) :

'Twas Nature's will who recketh naught of laws,  
And Nature made her woman for this very cause.

SMICRINES : What, have you lost your senses ?

SOPHRONA : I'll quote you a whole passage from the *Auge* of Euripides, complete, if you won't see at last.

SMICRINES : Your tragic airs drive me wild. Are you fully aware of what he is saying ?

SOPHRONA : I'm well aware.

ONESIMUS : You may be sure that the nurse knew before.

SMICRINES : But it's a frightful thing.

SOPHRONA : There never was anything more fortunate. If what you say is true, the child belongs to both, and all is well.

*(The rest is missing. SMICRINES, ONESIMUS, and SOPHRONA will be ready to go in after a few more lines, and with their disappearance the play will end.)*



#### IV. THE SHEARING OF GLYCERA

IN the *Perikeiromene* or *Shearing of Glycera*, Menander treats again the theme of love and the improvement effected in a man by enforced prostration at the feet of a mistress. In this play the hero is of a very different type from Charisius of the *Epitrepontes*. He is a Corinthian, POLEMON by name, who has seen service in Macedonian armies at a time when such service brought comparative wealth to the soldier. Polemon is a notable representative of the military type. He evidently is perfectly at home in camps and thoroughly at a loss to deal with situations that do not yield to the sword. He is an overgrown boy, petulant, simple-minded, rash in action, difficult to live with, but always forgivable.

The heroine may also be contrasted with Pamphila in the *Epitrepontes*. GLYCERA has in her life no background of wealth. Originally one of those forlorn abandoned infants of whom we hear so often in Greek comedy, she had been picked up and reared by a woman of modest income, who had, however, because of those same Macedonian wars that enriched the soldier, been reduced to the very depths of poverty. It was out of the question that Glycera should marry ; rather it was matter of congratulation that she could be joined in an irregular union to the

prosperous soldier Polemon, who at least loved his mistress and treated her with lavish generosity.

Another character is MOSCHION, the Bob Acres of the play. He is the spoiled darling of a wealthy lady, Myrrhina, whom he supposes to be his mother. He cuts a dash in the town and is chock-full of that inordinate self-esteem which is the favourite target of comedy. In reality he is twin brother to Glycera and in origin like her a foundling. This fact, known to her, but not to him, is important for the motivation of the play. His supposed mother, Myrrhina, does not appear in the parts of the play that have come down to us. She is not only Moschion's adopted mother but a good friend of Glycera.

There are four other characters : Moschion's slave DAVUS ; Glycera's maid DORIS, who is Polemon's slave, bought for Glycera's service ; SOSIA, Polemon's sergeant, who is boisterous at all times and often drunk to boot ; and PATAECUS, an elderly friend of Polemon, who turns out at the end of the play to be the long-lost father of the once more united twins.

Of the play we have less than half, but still enough to give us a good deal of the plot, since our material comprises sections from near the beginning, the middle, and the end of the play. Unfortunately one long scene is concerned chiefly with humorous by-play which, in the condition of the text, is not very intelligible. I shall accordingly omit some of it in my translation. The text is badly mutilated and uncertain in many places. There are two houses in the scene, that occupied by Myrrhina and Moschion,

and the house which Polemon provides for Glycera. The play probably began with the scene which gives it its title. There is an altercation between Glycera and Polemon. The latter had the evening before returned from the war and had surprised Glycera in the embrace of her fashionable neighbour, Moschion. He naturally leapt to the conclusion that Glycera was unfaithful to him and now in a fit of frenzy draws his sword and leaves her reft of her locks, an object of derision and aversion.

After this brief scene the stage is cleared and the personified figure of MISAPPREHENSION appears. Most of her speech remains. She tells how the twins were exposed and how they were found by a woman who took them up. The rest can be given in her own words.

MISAPPREHENSION : The woman gladly took the girl herself, and gave the boy to a rich lady who wanted a baby ; she lives in the house that you see here on your right. Now several years passed, and the war and the misfortunes of Corinth went from bad to worse. The old lady was in dire need ; the girl was now grown up—you saw her on the stage a moment ago—and this impetuous youth that you also saw, a Corinthian by birth, had fallen in love with her ; so she gave the girl into his keeping, ostensibly as her own daughter. Later though, when she had become quite feeble and foresaw that life's final scene was not far off, she did not cover up the facts, but told the young

woman how she had picked her up, and gave her at the same time the baby clothes that she had been wrapped in. She also told her of her brother by birth, of whom she had known nothing, thus providing for certain possibilities. The girl might for instance be some day in need of assistance, and she knew that he was her only kinsman. The disclosure was also a safeguard to prevent any accidental developments between the young people because of me, Misapprehension. Anything might have happened, for he was rich and constantly fired with wine, she knew, while the girl was young and pretty, and there was no stability in her present protector.

Well, the woman died and the soldier not long ago bought the house here on your left. But though the girl lives next door to her brother, she has disclosed nothing. She does not want to bring about any alteration in his position, for he seems to be brilliantly placed ; she wants him to profit by the gifts of fortune. He did get sight of her, however, by accident. He has plenty of self-confidence, as I said, and so has been purposely visiting the house. Last evening she happened to be sending her maid on some errand, and, as soon as he saw her at the door up he rushed and fell a-kissing and a-hugging her. She, though, knowing beforehand that he was her brother, didn't run away. But Polemon arrives and sees them. The rest he has told himself, how he left her with a warning that he would see her again



when he had time, while she stood weeping and lamenting that she could not freely do as she had. Now all this blaze was kindled for the sake of what is coming. It has made Polemon fall into a rage. That was my doing ; he's not that kind of person naturally. And it is the first step toward bringing the rest of the story to light, so that the twins may find their friends at last.

So if anyone is offended at what he has seen [Polemon cutting off Glycera's hair] and has supposed that the girl was disgraced, he will have to alter his views ; for a god may overrule the evil that is done and turn it into good. Farewell, our audience, be gracious and support us in the rest of our play. (*The first act ends as MISAPPREHENSION leaves the stage.*)

## ACT II

(SOSIA comes from POLEMON'S house, carrying a cloak. He has been sent for it from the country where POLEMON is at present staying.)

SOSIA : Our blustering warrior of a while ago, who sets his ban on women having hair, lies flat on his back a-sobbing. When I left just now, lunch was being got for them, and his comrades were met to console him. And since he has no way of learning what is happening here, he has dispatched me for the special purpose of fetching a cloak—not that he needs anything, he wants me to have the walk.

(Meanwhile GLYCERA, frightened out of her wits at the soldier's violence, has decided that she must at any cost gain assistance. She resolves to appeal to her neighbour, Myrrhina, and to enlist her support. She will say nothing to MOSCHION, if she can avoid it. She orders DORIS first to make sure that SOSIA has gone, for he will not be so ready as DORIS to risk POLEMON'S vengeance by helping GLYCERA. DORIS will then get in touch with Myrrhina, as a

*preliminary to GLYCERA'S flight. SOSIA lingers only a moment after DORIS appears.)*

DORIS : I'll go out and see, mistress.

SOSIA (*aside*) : There's Doris ! What a girl she's got to be, how she is flourishing ! They do live somehow, I can see that with half an eye, so they do. But I'll be off. (*He goes to report to POLEMON.*)

DORIS (*at the door of Myrrhina's house*) : I'll knock, since none of them are out of doors. Unhappy the woman whose husband is a soldier ! A violent lot they are, one and all, you never can trust them. O mistress mine, how unfairly he treats you ! (*Calling.*) Boys ! It will cheer him up to hear that she's crying now, for that's what master wanted. (*Someone comes to Myrrhina's door.*) Boy, please ask——

*(Here our text breaks off and a page or two are missing, in which Myrrhina probably appeared and, on hearing of GLYCERA'S plight, consented to take her in and hear her story. The transfer is soon made. GLYCERA leaves behind her wardrobe and her maid, which belong to POLEMON, and is welcomed by Myrrhina. MOSCHION was not at home. Perhaps he was keeping out of the way of his belligerent neighbour. But MOSCHION'S servant DAVUS was in the house and drew his own conclusions from what he had seen. He comes from the house as the revellers who are to amuse*

*the spectators between acts come in sight.  
He speaks to those inside.)*

DAVUS : But, fellows, here come a crowd of young men carousing. Mistress is in a class by herself, I'll say. She is taking the girl right into the house. There's a mother for you ! Now to find my young master, for apparently the moment has come when he can't arrive on the scene too soon, so it looks to me. (DAVUS goes to the city and the band of revellers occupy the stage and amuse the audience between acts.)

### ACT III

(DAVUS returns with MOSCHION, who naturally finds it hard to believe that his mother has really taken GLYCERA into the house by way of facilitating his amours.)

MOSCHION (*protesting*) : Davus, you've often enough before now brought me stories that hadn't a word of truth in them. In fact, you're a fraud and a good-for-nothing. So if you're leading me on a wild-goose chase this time too——

DAVUS (*confident*) : String me up for a beating at once, if I am.

MOSCHION : That's drawing it mild.

DAVUS : Then treat me to all the horrors of war. But if I *am* right and you find her here in the house, what then ? I've managed it all for you, Moschion, I wasted tons of arguments persuading the girl to come to this house, and your mother to take her in and carry out your wishes in everything ; what am I offered by way of promotion ?

(*There is an exchange of pleasantries between MOSCHION and DAVUS, and the latter is finally promised as a reward the opportunity to start in business on a small scale. He then continues.*)

DAVUS : Amen to that, as they say in meeting.  
Now then, this way, master, the portals wait thy entrance.

MOSCHION (*approaching the door*) : Audacity's my cue now ; console the poor girl and cheer her up ; snap my fingers at that miserable major, ostrich plumes and all.

DAVUS : Absolutely.

MOSCHION (*discreetly*) : Just you run in, please, Davus, and spy out the general situation. Find out where my mother is, whether they're expecting me or not. I needn't mention every little thing in a case of this sort, you know the ropes.

DAVUS : I'll go.

MOSCHION : I'll be waiting for you, Davus, pacing the street in front. (DAVUS *goes in*.) Well, she did betray some such feeling when I accosted her last evening. When I rushed up, instead of running off, she threw her arms about me and hugged me. I'm not unattractive, it would seem, to look at or to have to do with either. I really think so, by Athena, the hussies like me. But I really must knock wood.

DAVUS (*returning*) : Moschion, she's made her toilet and is sitting there.

MOSCHION : O you darling !

DAVUS : Your mother is going about arranging something or other, but lunch is ready and, as far as I can judge by what they are doing, they're

waiting for you—and have been for some time, for that matter.

MOSCHION : Is there anything unattractive about me ? Did you tell them that I was here ?

DAVUS : No indeed.

MOSCHION : Then go and tell them now.

DAVUS : As you see, I'm there and back. (*Exit.*)

MOSCHION (*to himself*) : She'll be bashful when I enter, that's of course ; and she'll hide her face, that's the way they do. But as I go in, I must kiss mother the first thing, make her my staunch ally, dance attendance on her, follow her wishes implicitly, for just see how she has made my interests her own in this matter. But someone is coming out. (*DAVUS comes from the house quite crest-fallen.*) What does this mean, fellow ? How you hesitate about approaching me, Davus !

DAVUS : Yes, by Zeus, for I don't understand it. When I went and told your mother that you were here, ' No more of that,' says she, ' how has he heard ? Did you go blabbing to him that this girl was frightened and sought refuge here ? ' ' Certainly I did.' ' May you never see the year out,' says she. ' Now just you clear out, boy, and march off out of the way.' It's really so. All our hopes are dashed to the ground. She was anything but glad to hear that you had come.

MOSCHION : You scoundrel, you've played me a fine trick.



DAVUS : Nonsense ! It's your mother——

MOSCHION : What's that ? Does she object ? Or what is the matter ? Didn't you say you persuaded the girl to come to the house for my sake ?

DAVUS : I told you that I persuaded her to come ? By Apollo, I never did. Do you think, master, that I'm not telling the truth ?

MOSCHION : So you didn't say either just now that you helped persuade my mother yourself to take her into the house on my account ?

DAVUS : Yes, that, as you see, I did say. Oh yes, I recall it.

MOSCHION : And that you thought she was doing it for my sake.

DAVUS : That I can't say, but I certainly urged her.

MOSCHION : Very well. Just step this way.

DAVUS : Where ?

MOSCHION : Not far. You'll find out.

DAVUS : What was I going to say, Moschion ? . . . At that time I—— Wait just a bit.

MOSCHION : A cock-and-bull story to me, eh ?

DAVUS : No, no, by Asclepius, no indeed, if you'll only listen. Most likely she doesn't want, don't you see, to surrender to the first assault with no formalities. She wants to know first all about you, to hear what you have to say. Yes indeed. You see she hasn't come like a flute-girl or like some moth-eaten street-walker either.

MOSCHION : You can't tell me anything again, Davus.

DAVUS : Think it over. It's not absurd. She's left home. That's no cock-and-bull story. If you'll just disappear for three or four days, you'll find someone will get attached to you. I was given to understand that. You must listen now.

MOSCHION : Where am I to tie you up and leave you ? You're arranging for me to cool my heels a longish while. You lied a moment ago and now here you are rattling on again.

DAVUS : I can't think with you interrupting. Take the other tack, sort of, and go indoors quietly.

MOSCHION : While you take to your heels !

DAVUS : Of course ! Don't you see that I have provisions ?

MOSCHION (*pretending to yield, but retaining DAVUS*) : To be sure. Well, you lead the way, Davus. By going in with me, you can help me get something straightened out here. I yield the point to you.

DAVUS (*to himself*) : A close shave, by Heracles. Even now I'm wilted with terror. The situation isn't so easily diagnosed as I once supposed.

(MOSCHION *departs into the house, preceded by DAVUS. Meanwhile POLEMON has been somewhat consoled by SOSIA's report that he had seen GLYCERA. Though he knows nothing as yet of GLYCERA's leaving his house, his anxiety leads him to dispatch SOSIA on another scouting expedition.*

*SOSIA is talking to himself as he approaches POLEMON'S house.)*

SOSIA : Again I'm sent with his sword and cloak to see what she's doing and report on my return. I'm within an ace of telling him I found his rival in the house, just to make him jump up and come running. I would, too, if I weren't heartily sorry for him. To see my master so unfortunate ! It's no dream either. Seeing is believing. What a bitter home-coming ! *(As he enters POLEMON'S house, DORIS slips out and waits for his reappearance with some concern.)*

DORIS *(alone)* : The sergeant has come. It's a bad situation in every way, so it is, by Apollo. And at that there's the biggest item still to be accounted for, my master, once he gets back from the country—what a row he'll make when he appears on the scene.

*(As SOSIA comes out, DORIS retires to avoid his truculence. He has discovered GLYCERA'S absence and intends to find her. He is speaking to the servants within as he appears.)*

SOSIA : But you've let her go, you ungodly swine, you've let her leave the house !

DORIS *(to herself)* : The fellow's coming out again showing signs of temper. I'll retire a bit.

SOSIA *(to himself)* : She's gone straight off next door, that's plain, to her lover ; as for us, we can curse our luck good and plenty, that's her attitude.

DORIS (*to herself*) : The captain got a fortune-teller when he got you. You're pretty warm.

SOSIA : I'll knock at their door. (*SOSIA is just about to knock boldly at Myrrhina's door when DAVUS appears at some point of vantage and speaks.*)

DAVUS : What do you want, you unfortunate specimen of humanity ? Where are you going in such a hurry ?

SOSIA : Do you live here ?

DAVUS : Perhaps. But what's keeping you from your work ?

SOSIA : For heaven's sake, have you people lost your wits ? Have you the audacity to keep a free woman under lock and key, in violation of the rights of her lawful master ?

DAVUS : How vile, how unscrupulous a man must be to descend to such scurrilous charges !

SOSIA : Do you think we're chicken-hearted, that we're not men ?

DAVUS : Oh yes, heaven knows you're men, shilling-a-day men. When you've got a few guinea-a-day men on your side, then we'll be ready to fight you.

SOSIA : Heracles, what a shameless exhibition ! So you admit you have her ; speak out.

DAVUS : Fellow, begone.

SOSIA (*pretending to call to a comrade*) : Hilarion ! He's gone. He happens to be an eye-witness and says you have her.

DAVUS : Before long I hope to see some of you tied up and howling.

SOSIA : Who do you think you're playing with ? What are you drivelling about ? We'll storm this wretched shanty double quick. Get the lady-killer into his armour.

DAVUS : Hard luck, you poor thing. Have you been hanging around all this time, because you thought she was here ?

SOSIA : To arms, fellows ! (*Turning to DAVUS.*) They'll ransack the whole place quick as a wink, call 'em shilling-a-day men or not.

DAVUS : I wasn't serious when I said that. The truth is you're a sewer-rat.

SOSIA : You call yourselves civilized——

DAVUS : But we haven't got her.

SOSIA : Faugh ! I'll take a pike to you.

DAVUS : Clear out and be damned. I'm going, since you've apparently lost your wits. (*DAVUS disappears and DORIS comes from her hiding-place.*)

DORIS : Sosia !

SOSIA : If you'll just step this way, Doris, I'll give you a very bad time. You're at the bottom of this.

DORIS : Bless you, tell me why ? Because she was frightened and took refuge somewhere with a woman ?

SOSIA : Frightened and took refuge somewhere with a woman ?

DORIS : As a matter of fact she's gone to Myrrhina's next door. If that isn't so, may I never get what I want.

SOSIA : You see where she's off to—where the object of her affection is, that's where.

*(Here the text breaks off entirely. Perhaps seventy lines are missing. When the next fragment takes up the story, POLEMON is present, accompanied by SOSIA and his army, a motley crew, and at least one light-o'-love, Habrotonon, who has her flute with her. SOSIA is drunk and boisterous. POLEMON is ready for any violence in order to regain GLYCERA. The restraining influence is provided by PATAECUS, an elderly friend of POLEMON. POLEMON had appealed to him to aid in the recovery of GLYCERA. PATAECUS had agreed to act in POLEMON's interest, but insisted on the dismissal of the army, before negotiations should be undertaken. POLEMON is inclined to listen, but SOSIA is all for action.)*

SOSIA : He's come from them with his pockets lined. Trust me. He's a traitor to you and the army.

PATAECUS (to SOSIA) : Go off and have a nap, my dear fellow. Forget these battles. You're not well. I'm talking to you. By gad, you're tipsy.

SOSIA (*indignant*) : When I've been drinking less, perhaps half a pint, because I knew what would happen, worse luck, and was keeping myself fit for the emergency.

PATAECUS : Quite right. Just do as I say. (SOSIA *subsides for a moment.*)

POLEMON (*to* PATAECUS) : What advice have you for me ?

PATAECUS : That's a proper question. Now then, it's my turn to talk to you.

SOSIA (*to a light-o'-love in the company*) : Sound the alarm, Habrotonon. (*There is a new outbreak on the part of the army.*)

PATAECUS (*to* POLEMON) : First send this fellow inside with his followers.

SOSIA (*protesting*) : That's poor strategy. Are you going to dismiss the army when you should carry the place by assault ? This Pataecus here is ruining me.

PATAECUS (*impatiently*) : Is there no one in command ?

POLEMON (*to* SOSIA) : For heaven's sake, fellow, be off.

SOSIA : I'm off. I thought you would *do* something. (*He departs with Habrotonon and the army amid scurrilous jests. All go inside but SOSIA, who collapses at the door and goes to sleep.*)

PATAECUS : If your statement is correct about what took place, Polemon, and the girl is your lawful wife——



POLEMON : The very idea ! Of course she is.

PATAECUS : But it's of some importance.

POLEMON : I have always looked on her as my wife.

PATAECUS : Don't shout. Who put her into your hands ?

POLEMON : Who ? Why she herself.

PATAECUS : Very fine. Very likely you suited her then. Now, though, you don't, and she's gone off because you didn't use her properly.

POLEMON : What ! Not use her properly ! That hurts me more than anything you have said yet.

PATAECUS : I know perfectly well that you'll say in the end that at the present moment you're behaving like a lunatic. What's the idea ? Whom are you going to abduct ? She is her own mistress. When a man's at a disadvantage and loves a woman, no course is open but to win her by fair words.

POLEMON : But haven't I a case against the man who seduced her in my absence ?

PATAECUS : A case to justify lodging a complaint, if you finally resort to argument. But if you take the law into your own hands, you lose your case. You see the offence doesn't justify retaliation, but only the lodging of a complaint.

POLEMON : Not even now ?

PATAECUS : Not even now.

POLEMON : I don't know what I'm to say, by Demeter, except that I shall hang myself. Glycera

has gone and left me—gone and left me, Glycera—Pataecus. Well, if you really think that's the best we can do—since you used to be a friend of hers and have often talked with her before—you go and speak with her ; plead my case with her, I entreat you.

PATAECUS : You see, I think that's the best you can do.

POLEMON : Of course you can speak effectively, Pataecus ?

PATAECUS : Oh, passably.

POLEMON : But, Pataecus, really you must. Our only hope is in that. If ever I have done her the least wrong—if it doesn't remain through all the one object of my ambition—I wish you could see her fine clothes.

PATAECUS : Don't worry.

POLEMON : Do please look at them, Pataecus. You'll feel for me more strongly.

PATAECUS : O Lord !

POLEMON : Come this way. What clothes ! and what a marvellous sight she is, when she puts any of them on ! Maybe you hadn't seen her ?

PATAECUS : Oh yes, I have.

POLEMON : For that matter, she was handsome enough, no doubt of that, to be worth looking at. But what's the good of dragging in the fact that she's handsome now, addlepate that I am, rambling on about what makes no difference.

PATAECUS : Not at all, not at all.

POLEMON : Really ? But indeed you must take a look. Do step this way. Come along.

PATAECUS (*yielding to the inevitable*) : I'm coming.

*(As they disappear into POLEMON'S house to inspect GLYCERA'S wardrobe, MOSCHION comes from Myrrhina's house armed for combat. He shouts at the retreating enemy, who can no longer hear him.)*

MOSCHION : Make yourselves scarce this minute, you ; get in. Armed with spears have they leapt forth upon me ! But they couldn't storm a swallow's nest, the sort of sneaking villains that are here. (*Looking round and seeing no one but the drunken SOSIA.*) 'But,' says he, 'they had trained soldiers,' and your far-famed soldiers amount to this one Sosia here. (*Reflectively.*) There have been a good many made miserable in recent times, for, whatever the reason may be, misery's a crop that doesn't fail anywhere in Greece nowadays, but I don't believe among them all there's a living human being as miserable as I am ; no, I don't. As soon as I entered, instead of doing as I always have, going to my mother in her room, or summoning someone from the inner rooms to me, I went into a little room out of the way and there I lay down most composedly. Meanwhile I send Davus in to make my presence known, no other message, to my mother. He, however, with mighty little concern for me, finding them in the

midst of lunch, proceeded to stow away all he could, while I in the meantime was lying on my couch and saying to myself : ' My mother will be here directly with a message from my sweetheart, letting me know on what terms she consents to join me.' I was practising a speech myself——

*(Here there is a long gap of about one hundred and sixty verses. MOSCHION probably went on to relate how he was finally undeceived in regard to GLYCERA'S intentions by overhearing a conversation between her and his mother, which also roused his curiosity in regard to his own identity and in regard to GLYCERA'S antecedents. At the point where we are able to take up the story again, these difficulties are in process of solution. GLYCERA has come out and is talking to PATAECUS, who, it will be remembered, had agreed to act as POLEMON'S ambassador and to induce her, if possible, to return to the soldier. GLYCERA is emphatically pointing out to PATAECUS that he has made a great mistake in accepting POLEMON'S view that she had left him for MOSCHION, and that she had formed a liaison with the latter during the soldier's absence.)*

GLYCERA : You're not considering what possible aim I could have had in that case in coming to his mother's house and in taking refuge here. Could I have hoped that he would marry me ? Oh yes,

he's quite on a level with me in birth ! If not that, then maybe I hoped to become his mistress. Well, in that case wouldn't I and he too do our best, for pity's sake, to keep it a secret from his parents ? Should I, instead, have planted myself recklessly in his father's way ? Should I have been foolish enough to choose a course that would make me hated here and implant in your minds a suspicion that could never again be effaced ? Should I feel no shame even, Pataecus ? Did you too come to me convinced of that ; did you suppose that I had come to be that sort ?

PATAECUS : I hope not indeed, by Zeus on high. I hope, moreover, that you'll prove our suspicions really false, as I for my part am convinced they were. But go back to Polemon nevertheless.

GLYCERA : Let him insult other girls hereafter.

PATAECUS : The outrage wasn't a deliberate act.

GLYCERA : It was a wicked act, and even a slave girl, for pity's sake, isn't treated like that.

*(A few lines are missing in which GLYCERA offers to produce evidence of her free status and describes the tokens that were her only heritage. She begs PATAECUS to take her part and help her assert her independence. He begins to suspect that she may be his long-lost daughter. She is speaking of the tokens.)*

GLYCERA : From her I received some keepsakes of my father and mother, which she bade me keep in my possession at all times and not lose.

PATAECUS : Well, what do you want ?

GLYCERA : I want them brought to me.

PATAECUS : You're still determined to break with the man for good ? What's your wish, my dear girl ?

GLYCERA : I want you to arrange it for me. Will you do it ?

PATAECUS : It's nothing to take lightly ; you ought to take everything into consideration.

GLYCERA : I know my own affairs best.

PATAECUS : Is that the way you feel about it ? Which of the maids knows where you keep these things ?

GLYCERA : Doris does.

PATAECUS (*going to the door of POLEMON'S house*).  
Tell Doris to come outside, someone. (*To GLYCERA.*)  
All the same, Glycera, I entreat you, do yield and forgive him on the terms I propose.

DORIS (*coming out*) : Oh, mistress, what is it ? What trouble we are in !

GLYCERA : Fetch me out the casket that has the embroidered things in it, Doris. Do you know it ?

DORIS : Yes, indeed.

GLYCERA : The one I gave you to keep. Why are you crying, poor girl ?

*(Here a few verses are missing. We next find PATAECUS and GLYCERA examining the contents of the casket together. PATAECUS is attempting to identify the embroidery with some that he remembered from long ago.)*

PATAECUS : The same as I saw then. Isn't this next one a goat or a bull or some such beast.

GLYCERA : It's a stag, my friend. A goat doesn't have horns like that.

PATAECUS : I see.

GLYCERA : And the third one here is a winged horse.

PATAECUS : These things belonged to my wife, poor, poor woman.

*(He weeps as he studies the tokens. During this conversation MOSCHION has been listening unseen. He soliloquizes.)*

MOSCHION : It's an impossibility, that's the only conclusion I can arrive at, any way I look at it, that my mother should have had a child and should really have abandoned a daughter born to her. But if it did happen and Glycera is my sister, then my disaster is complete, curse the luck.

PATAECUS (to GLYCERA) : But will the rest of the evidence accord with my story ?

GLYCERA : Examine me on any point you please.

PATAECUS : Where did you get these things that you have ? Tell me.



GLYCERA : They are the clothes I had once as a foundling.

MOSCHION (*to himself*) : Launch out into the deep !  
Borne helpless on the waves I reach the crisis of my own fortune.

PATAECUS : Was there no other ? Make that clear to me.

GLYCERA : There was indeed. With me a brother was abandoned.

MOSCHION (*to himself*) : That answers one of my questions.

PATAECUS : What then caused your separation ?

GLYCERA : I could explain it all, for I have heard the tale. But question me about myself, since that is mine to tell. The rest I've given her my oath I'll not disclose.

MOSCHION (*to himself*) : That statement gives me a plain clue, for she gave my mother an oath. Where in the world am I ?

PATAECUS : Who took you in and kept you, pray ?

GLYCERA : A woman kept me, she who found me lying there.

PATAECUS : Some indication of the place had you from her ?

GLYCERA : A spring she mentioned and a shady nook.

PATAECUS : The same that he who left the babes described to me.

GLYCERA : And who was he ? If naught prevents, let me know too.

PATAECUS : A servant left you there, 'twas I who would not rear you. (*He embraces GLYCERA as his long-lost daughter.*)

GLYCERA : You abandoned your own children ? What induced you ?

PATAECUS : Many are the sudden freaks, my child, of fortune. Your mother died in bearing you, and just the day before, my daughter——

GLYCERA : What happened, pray ? God's mercy, how I tremble !

PATAECUS : I was reduced to poverty, though used to wealth.

GLYCERA : What ! In one day ? A frightful blow, ye gods !

PATAECUS : News reached me that the ship which was our sole support was lost beneath the wild Ægean's briny waves.

GLYCERA : Merciful heaven, what a disaster !

PATAECUS : So I came to the conclusion that no man would saddle himself with infants to feed, when he was destitute, unless he had taken leave of his wits. Yet children are the dearest property of all. What is the rest like ?

GLYCERA : It shall all be listed. There was a necklace with a few engraved gems that were put with the babes as marks of recognition.

PATAECUS : Shall we inspect them.

GLYCERA : We can't now.

PATAECUS : Why so ?

GLYCERA : My brother got the rest as his share, of course.

MOSCHION (*to himself*) : Then this man, so it seems, is my father.

PATAECUS : Can you tell me what there was ?

GLYCERA : There was a crimson girdle.

PATAECUS : So there was.

GLYCERA : And the pattern on it girls in a dance. You recall it then ? And a transparent wrap and a gold head-band. That completes the list.

*(Here another gap intervenes with some indication that MOSCHION at this point declares himself and embraces his father and his sister. GLYCERA'S fortune is made and POLEMON has now no hope of winning her back. It is, however, just her new-found security that gives her confidence to face him and accept him once more as a lover. The final scene is preserved. POLEMON is talking to DORIS.)*

POLEMON : I intended to hang myself.

DORIS : Oh, don't do that.

POLEMON : But what am I to do, Doris ? How am I to live, God have mercy on me, apart from her ?

DORIS : She'll come back to you——

POLEMON : Gracious heaven, what news !

DORIS : If you'll do your best to be kind hereafter.

POLEMON : I'd never fall short in anything, I assure you, for you are more than right. Go at once. I'll set you free to-morrow, Doris. (*Exit DORIS.*) But let me tell you what you are to say. She's gone in. Oh, my angry, angry passions, how you took me by storm ! It was a brother, not a lover to whom she gave that kiss. And I, fiend that I was, utterly blind with jealousy, at once ran amuck. As a result I was going to hang myself and for good reason. (*DORIS returns.*) What news, my dear Doris ?

DORIS : Good news ; she will come to you.

POLEMON : Are you mocking me ?

DORIS : No, by Aphrodite. But she was dressing up and parading for her father. Now you ought at once to celebrate her good fortune with a feast—it came in time of need—now that her ship has come in at last.

POLEMON : By Zeus I will, for you're quite right. The cook from the market is in the house ; let him slaughter the sow.

DORIS : But where's the basket, and the other requirements ?

POLEMON : The basket can wait, only let him get the sow slaughtered. Better than that, I'll rob some altar of a wreath myself and put it on. (*Does so.*)

DORIS : Yes, you'll look a lot more convincing so.

POLEMON : Now bring Glycera at once.

DORIS : Really she was just about to come out—  
with her father.

POLEMON : What, he? What will become of me?  
(POLEMON *retreats into his house.*)

DORIS : Goodness, what are you doing? He's run away. Is it so terrible when a door rattles? I'll go in myself to do what I can to help. (DORIS *also retires as PATAECUS leads GLYCERA, now handsomely arrayed, on to the stage.*)

PATAECUS (*to GLYCERA*) : I'm quite delighted to hear you say you'll do your part to be friends again. When prosperity arrives, to accept satisfaction then, that's a mark of the true Greek spirit. But let someone run and fetch him.

POLEMON (*emboldened, from his retreat*) : No, I'll come out myself. I was preparing a Thanksgiving feast, to celebrate the news that Glycera had discovered those that she wanted to.

PATAECUS : You are quite right. Now, though, attend to what I'm going to say. I bestow this woman on you as your lawful wife.

POLEMON : As such I take her.

PATAECUS : With a dowry of three talents.

POLEMON : That's very good too.

PATAECUS : From now on forget that you are a soldier and spare your friends any inconsiderate acts.

POLEMON : Heaven help me ! When I've come within an ace of ruin this time, is it likely I shall ever be inconsiderate again ? I won't even find fault with Glycera. Only be friends, dearest.

GLYCERA : I will, for this time your losing your head led to good fortune.

POLEMON : So it did, my dear.

GLYCERA : Consequently I've consented to forgive you.

POLEMON (*as they go in together*) : Do join our celebration, Pataecus.

PATAECUS : I must set about arranging another wedding, since I'm marrying my son to Philinus' daughter.

MOSCHION (*appearing suddenly and protesting*) : O powers above——

(*This is all we have of the play, which is evidently drawing to a close.*)



## V. AN ESTIMATE OF MENANDER

WHAT are we to think of Menander? We have for guidance the three fragmentary plays that have been rendered in this book and the various criticisms that have come down to us from ancient authors. Must we acquiesce in the disparaging statement of Barrett Wendell, in his book *The Traditions of European Literature from Homer to Dante*? Speaking of the newly-found remains of Menander, he says: "These are generally agreed to be disappointing. Apart from a certain swift and gay ease, they are on the whole inferior to any equal amount taken from his comparatively laborious Latin imitators. It seems at least possible that Plautus and Terence are about as much better than he was as Molière is better than they."

One at once challenges the statement that the fragments are "generally agreed" to be disappointing. It is true that we cannot easily find in English an authoritative and enthusiastic appreciation of Menander. There are, however, no greater names in the field of Greek literary criticism than those of Maurice Croiset in France and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in Germany. Croiset wrote of Menander as long ago as 1909 (*Revue des deux Mondes*, p. 806): "It seems that Athens, at the very time when her



historic destinies were drawing to a close, gathered up, as it were, and concentrated in this charming spirit the finest essence of her genius and all that was most human in her tradition." Wilamowitz' recent edition of the *Epitrepontes* (Berlin, 1925) is not only a product of brilliant scholarship, but a work inspired by literary insight. At the end of his essay on the art of Menander, included in his book, he points out that the absence of any sharp distinction between tragedy and comedy on the modern stage is the attainment of a goal toward which Menander was making progress in the *Epitrepontes* and other dramas. He goes on to say in conclusion: "But a poet must arise who will hold up a mirror to the life of his period and still preserve a strict verse-form and a unity of style like Menander's, before the latter will have been surpassed. Moreover, only then will the condition laid down by Plato be satisfied, that the same art should embrace the whole tragedy and comedy of life."

The views of these modern scholars reinforce the almost unanimous estimate of ancient critics. Homer stands supreme at the beginning of Greek literature; after him follow Æschylus, Thucydides, Plato, and many others of the first rank. Menander's place is with them; he is last in time; in development his work is the fitting culmination of what went before. Homer and Menander were five hundred years apart, yet in achievement they are brothers. Homer created in the heroic tragi-comedy of his epics countless figures endowed with pulsating vehement

life. Vividness and variety are never absent from his work. Those two qualities are the chief element in Menander's greatness. His tragi-comedy is not divine or even heroic, but truly human. His characters have been caught in the net of civilization. The spirit of Achilles was still incarnate in his day in Alexander of Macedon, but Alexander ranged far beyond the limits of Menander's world. In fact Menander's world is only a city, a city once full of enterprise which had in the fullness of experience learned to set its affection on common things. Of common things and common people Menander writes, but the work of his pen leaves them immortalized in possession of a charm that common life can have only when seen through the eyes of a supreme genius. Vividness, variety, and universality, these three, are found in Menander. The greatest of them is vividness, and that we do not have to take on trust. It can be discerned even in our mangled fragments. The truth is that English and American scholarship deserve to repent in sackcloth and ashes for their failure to create for Menander the esteem that should be his both among the ranks of Greek students and in the general field of literature.

The stumbling-blocks to appreciation of Menander's work are obvious. His technique is archaic and his plots are melodramatic. Now archaic technique is found also in early sculpture, and it is there also at first a stumbling-block; but to most students of ancient statues and reliefs there comes in time an affection for the earlier work that they do not feel

for the triumphs of technique that were produced so lavishly later. In primitive art the wonder is that any message at all could be conveyed with such limited resources. The limitation of the means gives emphasis to the meaning. The motivating vision of the artist appears as an active force, a force powerful enough to enliven the brute stone in which it is embodied. There is in archaic sculpture the wistful charm of a child whose imagination joyously outruns the slow pace of actual accomplishment. At the same time any stiffness in the result makes apparent the artist's struggle with his work-stuff, the spiritual shines out by contrast with the material, and, most important of all, the artist succeeds in expressing his meaning simply and unmistakably. The meaning must be there to guide the artist, for his technique has no mechanical perfection of the sort that works on without artistic motive. The meaning cannot be complicated by any exuberance of expression, for the artist is still concentrating on the problem of saying one thing well. The result is an object that repels the ordinary sightseer by its frank avowal of imperfect mastery over the means of expression, but delights the connoisseur by its single-hearted devotion to the ideal which the artist had it in him to create.

In the days of Menander sculpture had come of age. The artist had inherited a bag of tricks which enabled him to repeat in infinite variety the technical achievements of earlier ages. Decadence was setting in. The technique of comedy, however, was still

thoroughly archaic. There was little possibility and no intention of presenting the spectators with an action happening exactly as in life. Everything was stylized—the stage-setting, the masks of the characters and their costumes, the gestures, and the language. Characters pass on and off the stage according to the author's will. He has a story to tell and his puppets tell it. They are frankly puppets. No one apparently cared very much whether they had or had not motives of their own for appearing when the author needed them. They frequently explain the action to the audience with no concealment of the fact that they are not real people. They engage in long soliloquies that make clear the struggle of motives within them and the determining forces of their acts. In real life people mostly fail to explain their acts, either because they cannot, or because they are so intent on action that they move first and explain only afterward, not truly but in accordance with the revision of reason.

There are of course advantages in this *naïveté* of presentation. The author's meaning becomes much clearer and depends far less on the subtlety of the actor's art. One always knows what Menander means when the text of a soliloquy is certain and complete, sometimes even when it is not, whereas Ibsen with his realistic presentation would often be obscure even with stage directions, unless we had an inspired performance of a whole play by actors of genius. Menander could not represent thunderstorms, shipwrecks, sick-beds or lovers' lanes on his

stage, but he was allowed complete freedom to interpret the motives and the inner life of his characters. The art of the cinema has reached exactly the opposite extreme. Anything mechanical anywhere in time or space can be represented, but of character only the crudest expressions and categories are allowed to appear. The conventional technique of the Greek theatre greatly limited its superficial appeal, but a master like Menander found in it a medium for presenting intimate and self-revealing human nature with a range and a power that have seldom or never been equalled. Menander was a genius and could do this. To those who could not do this was left the concern for improvement in dramatic technique.

Even more than the technique of Greek New Comedy, the restricted and somewhat unnatural subject matter has required to be explained by apologists. Why must the material of Greek comedy always be young men in love, ravished virgins, exposed infants and tricky slaves? Why do the plays always end with the discovery of long-lost parents and a wedding or two? The only answer is that such was the taste of the time. Why is adultery a favourite theme in French novels and not in English? Why do Elizabethan tragedies usually end with the death of one or more of the important characters? The truth is that the only effective dramatic ending is the presentation of a *fait accompli*; and for comedy the wedding is as inevitable as for tragedy the funeral. To be sure comedies may

nowadays end with the sudden acquisition of a fortune and tragedies with the bloodless separation of a pair of lovers, but after all it is not so much what happens in the end that interests us, but how it happens, and any plot is a good plot if it brings on the stage a succession of live interesting characters who have something to say. The only justification for Menander's use of the stock devices of comedy with the improbabilities inherent in them, is the old one which justifies so many improbable plots, including that of *Ædipus Tyrannus*, that by using them the author has created an enduring masterpiece of literature.

Plots and technique must in any literature be taken for granted to some extent. The mechanical side of play-production is always distracting until the playgoer has learned what to expect. The more conventional the background of dramatic art is, the less the spectator will be distracted. Menander could interest his audience in the inner life of his characters partly because there was so little novelty in the externals of his plays. A great artist interprets the drama of existence on the stage by evoking at moments of crisis from the husk which moves and is visible to those about, the utterance of the real man within. Men rarely interpret their own natures in life. On the stage they may transcend ordinary reality. The dramatist may give them a voice and words to interpret the significance of their struggles. This is particularly true in stylized and in poetic drama. Each character in Menander is his own



mouthpiece and so it comes about that in his plays there was presented, not to the eye but to the imagination, a reality that ancient critics found more living than life itself.

A comparison with later writers of comedy will throw into relief the qualities of Menander. To Plautus he is superior not in degree but in kind. The plays of Plautus probably bore about as much relation to the Greek original as a modern musical comedy does to the play from which it is adapted. Plautus is full of life and fun and it is not disparaging him to point out that his wit, however good, makes no pretence of springing from any deep or delicate conceptions of human nature, as does Menander's humour. Plautus deals with some of the most harrowing facts of life, just as Menander does, love and jealousy and the plight of slave girls or of unmarried mothers, but in his laughter there is never a hint of tears. Plautus is the clown who, though he may have had one, at least never displayed an aching heart. Joy and sorrow are equally funny when seen through Plautus' eyes. The laughter of Menander is merry enough, but tears are always lurking in the background, and again and again he achieves that triumph of all art, the mingling in one potion of the bitter and the sweet, an enchanted cup fraught with potency to move the reader like nothing else in literature.

Menander is superior to Terence not in kind but in power. Terence gives us the same blend but so diluted that it never intoxicates and exhilarates but

mildly. Julius Cæsar observed this long ago and apostrophized Terence as a half-Menander. The charm of style was there but the creative power was absent. Even the greatest admirers of Terence must admit that his characters are blurred. Menander's people are as distinct in memory as people in the street. Each has his own concerns and his own mannerisms. The characters of Terence are more or less palsied. They engage in stirring action with such unconcern that they are at once detected as only people in a play, not real vibrating human beings. Not stirred themselves, they do not stir the reader. Terence's charm lies in his language for one thing. He is a marvellous master of Latin, and for sonority and weight Terence's Latin is superior to Menander's Greek. Doubtless Menander was dramatically right in not trying to compose like Plato; but, though Terence may spoil his drama in order to write sententiously, he must be given credit for doing his sententiousness very well indeed.

Terence, in his adaptations of Menander, introduced technical improvements. His characters never address the audience. Moreover, he sometimes took pains to avoid monologue by introducing a second speaker. His technique is in general more advanced and more self-conscious than that of Menander. In at least one case, however, his improvement results in a really shocking piece of patchwork. No one likes the scene in Terence's *Eunuchus* where Chaerea comes out and describes to a comrade how he had raped an unsuspecting girl. In the first place the



scene is morally offensive. Neither of the young men seems to feel the least compunction of conscience and, not only that, they are not even interested. The ravisher is as cool as a cucumber and the two go off to a banquet as if nothing had happened. Now we know from Plutarch that this is what Menander never did. The violation of the girl was of course in the original play of Menander from which Terence adapted the *Eunuchus*, but in Menander the young man described the experience in a monologue. Now we may assume that in this monologue he showed himself excited, overwrought and repentant, for, according to Plutarch,<sup>1</sup> such acts in Menander's plays regularly led to repentance, reform, and marriage. The moral obtuseness thus introduced by Terence is not all. The character who is introduced to replace the monologue by a dialogue has absolutely no business in the play, and his introduction is a most absurd violation of dramatic propriety. Better a monologue than a dialogue with a wholly inorganic character.

Terence's improvements in dramatic technique could only give him a claim to superiority over Menander if he had shown himself capable of doing more than patchwork. Of this there is no evidence. He has, however, another quality besides his style that endears him to his readers, namely his humanity. There is a breadth of sympathy in his treatment of character that is conspicuous by contrast with Plautus. Even in Terence, however, there are

<sup>1</sup> *Quæstiones Conviviales*, 7, 8, 3.

curious aberrations of which the piece of moral obtuseness cited from the *Eunuchus* is an example. It seems at least possible that Terence derived his broad humanity from Menander. He reproduced it exquisitely where he found it in the original, but he lacked the invention to devise scenes of his own in which this quality was incorporated. The spirit of Menander breathes through many scenes of Terence and through the whole play of the *Adelphi*. Terence appreciated Menander and he wrote Latin superbly. If he did not have Menander's power of creating characters with a life of their own, we can only share Cæsar's regret that this should be so.

With regard to the comparative merits of Greek and Latin writers of comedy, there is a passage of Aulus Gellius (II, 23) which would be more instructive if the text were less corrupt. Gellius points out that no matter how good a scene may appear to be when a Latin comedy is read, nevertheless the Greek original is always found, when one turns to it, to be incomparably better. He compares Menander and Caecilius for one scene to the latter's discredit. Since Caecilius was usually ranked ahead of Terence, it is clear that the superiority of Menander to Terence would have seemed beyond dispute. The Latin writers are defective in naturalness, in charming by-play and in dramatic consistency. They do not let us see the play of motives before action; the character declares his motives and acts. Hence a well-known wooden effect. Jokes and moral sentiments are introduced without regard to dramatic

propriety, so that the characters seem more concerned about making bright remarks than about living their own lives. The result is that blurring which has been mentioned before and a failure to stir the audience. Nothing could be more perverse in the way of literary criticism than to put Terence ahead of Menander. One might as well prefer Seneca as a dramatist to Æschylus, or as a philosopher to Plato. Whole generations have been guilty of that sort of thing in the past, and they will be again so long as no one rises to insist with authority on the superiority of the best.

The temptation to compare Menander with Shakespeare is irresistible. Shakespeare is great as a poet and as a tragedian. He did not write comedies in the ordinary sense. His so-called comedies are romantic or fanciful histories, when they are not farce. *Twelfth Night* is much the best of them. It contains marvellous poetry, excellent sentiment and a rich vein of vigorous comedy. Menander lacks the poetry. His sentiment is more practical and less dreamy than Shakespeare's. His clowning is about as lively, and as realistic as Shakespeare's. The quality to be specially noted in Menander's comedy because it is lacking in Shakespeare's is the element of seriousness. Shakespeare is serious enough in tragedy. There his characters have a vitality that is overpowering. In comedy, however, almost anything can happen without disturbing the serenity of the atmosphere. In Menander there is an intensity of purpose in the characters which often contributes

to laughter and always humanizes it. The tragic-comedy of Menander can be paralleled in modern writers, in Barrie for instance, but not in Elizabethan writers. There are comic interludes in Shakespeare's tragedy, but they only throw into relief the note of tragedy. The union of laughter and tears in Menander is a really great achievement.

Molière is further from Menander than Shakespeare is. In fact as a writer of comedy Molière is as far from Menander as he can be. Molière is intellectual and Menander emotional. Molière's characters are much more abstract. They are not vividly presented as individuals demanding sympathy; they are simplified and analysed for criticism. Harpagon in *L'Avare* is the embodiment of one passion. He is much too consistent to be human. Molière is a reformer who appeals to the reason. Menander was equally a reformer, but he appealed to the heart. Molière argued for an improvement in the position of women. Menander, though women were less free in his day than in Molière's, proposes no removal of restrictions; he merely sets the example of loving them unashamed and treating them with respect. When Molière is serious, it is his own serious purpose that motivates his characters. They illustrate his thesis. Menander gives his characters a serious purpose of their own and a sense of their own importance as men, which confers on them a half-ludicrous dignity that is very touching. Molière dissects his people so skilfully that they appear as specimens; Menander presents his with the life

still in them. Molière is incomparable in his own field, but he hardly competes at all with Menander. With the latter laughter and sympathy go together. Even mean characters are allowed some individuality. For such a character as Tartuffe Molière allows no sympathy. He has not one trait to mark him as human. We laugh at him and detest him, but do not seek to understand him. A cook or a Smicrines may be so treated in Menander to some extent, but the dissection is never quite so complete. Menander tends to resemble Shakespeare, who makes a villain like Shylock so convincing that he may even be turned into a hero by another generation. In *Le Misanthrope* we have the contrast pointed. Molière found life a sham. Even love was bitter. He mocked and suffered. Menander loved life and embraced it ; above all he loved women ; and there can be no doubt that he enjoyed both life and women.

There is probably more resemblance to Menander in the Italian Goldoni than in any other of the modern classic writers. Perhaps someone who can appreciate Goldoni's pictures of life which he has written in the Venetian dialect, will carry out the comparison. Certainly we find no one who compares with Menander in feeling until we come to the eighteenth century. The freshness with which sentiment and common life awoke the interest of the contemporaries of Prévost, Richardson, Diderot and Lessing is paralleled by the change that came over literature in the fourth century in Greece. Euripides

had brought tragedy down to earth, but he dealt always with the abnormal and the romantic, with passions and situations far from common life. The new comedy learned to present real people in ordinary situations. It learned above all to present young men in love, and Menander in particular glorified love, perhaps for the first time in Greek literature. In the eighteenth century the man of feeling carried his sentiment so far that he became a joke. There was almost certainly some such exaggeration in Greek literature. If the *Hecyra* of Terence gives anything like a true notion of the work of Apollodorus of Carystus, the latter must have sacrificed sense to sensibility. His women have left earth and soared to heaven. They are perfect angels, even the prostitute. Unfortunately the men have to be brutal and stupid or the women would have nothing to be angelic about. In any case they are most unconvincing. There are no signs of such morbid developments in Menander. His people are not too good to be convincing and his sentiment is not artificial.

It is interesting to speculate what difference a knowledge of Menander would have made in the development of the theatre since the Renaissance. Would Molière have used him as Racine did Euripides? However that may be, the modern stage has reached a point where it has little to learn from Menander. Even his affection for women might seem a step backward, for the modern stage ventures to show women as independent agents, creating a life of their own without the help of man. In Menander



woman's greatest triumph is to win the devotion of a man. The range of interest in modern drama is vastly greater than in Menander's work, and many plays, even unpretentious ones, charm by their vivid presentation of ordinary people. Such a play may well appeal strongly to one spectator and not at all to another. One man likes his drama abstracted; he wants typical people significantly presented for intellectual analysis. Another enjoys the commonplace so long as it is depicted with vigour and with charm. Judgments of Menander will differ correspondingly. He will disappoint those who seek for the heroic or for the detached analysis of human folly. To those who like people for their individuality and can share the hopes and fears of ordinary humanity he will bring intense satisfaction. It is probable that if we had a dozen complete plays of Menander, his supreme genius would be universally recognized.







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